

Medevac: Airfield ops key to timely emergency response

1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

Thule's airfield is vital to ensuring timely emergency response for the high arctic, a fact proven once again May 14 when Canadian Forces Station Alert, about 375 miles north of Thule, requested medical evacuation assistance for an injured German scientist there.

Early that day, the scientist caught his glove in an ice auger which caused a major cut to his hand and dislocated his middle finger. CFS Alert, having only limited medical facilities, called Thule's hospital for assistance. Next came the call to open the airfield for the medevac mission.

Capt. Jeff Thomas, airfield operations flight commander, received the request at 11 p.m. May 14, and immediately began preparing the airfield for the patient's arrival.

"We have the longest runway north of the Arctic circle and the resources necessary for emergency response," said Capt. Thomas. Time was critical. "We only had a couple hours notice to prepare everything for arrival."

On-call tower controllers Tech. Sgt. Ron Brewer and Tech. Sgt. Bob Lockard opened the tower Friday at 11:30 p.m. They were assisted by Mitch



Photo by Capt. Jeff Thomas

Thule's airfield at one of its busiest moments—the Air Greenland Airbus and two Canadian C-130s, here for Operation BOXTOP. The airfield is key to providing medical evacuation services for northwest Greenland.

Roosevelt and Mette Eriksen working airfield operations and Rich Cox working weather.

At 1:26 a.m. May 15, less than two and half hours after the initial call, an Air Greenland DASH 6 (twin otter) from CFS Alert landed at Thule with the patient, who was taken directly to the hospital and stabilized.

"This is why we do the job—to ensure support to people in their times of need," said Capt. Thomas. "When people's lives and health are involved and they are depending on Thule's support, it gives you a good feeling when the medevac happens and is successful."

Tower controllers Tech. Sgt. Jae Ewing and Tech. Sgt. Roy Wanner, along with Mr. Roosevelt and Ms. Eriksen working airfield operations and Jack Stephens working weather, opened

the airfield again at 2 p.m. May 15 for the flight's departure. The DASH 6 left Thule at 3:10 p.m. en route to Qaanaaq (75 miles north of Thule), where the patient took a connecting flight to Nuuk, Greenland's capital, and then flew to Germany for follow-up tests and recovery time.

Thule's airfield has opened on weekends routinely for extra cargo missions, but not as often for emergencies. "Humanitarian missions are what the Air Force is known for," said Sgt. Brewer. "Emergencies are not routine situations—air traffic controllers take pride in going the extra mile."

Given Thule's isolated location and short port season, the airfield is key to getting personnel and supplies in and out of the base quickly.

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NSF Scientists return to Thule Air Base

By Heidi Steltzer

National Science Foundation

The National Science Foundation scientists began their annual migration to the High Arctic May 20. The whole flock did not arrive at once, but instead several of us will arrive each week until late-June. Some will be familiar faces from last summer and others are new recruits ready for their first trip up to 76 degrees North latitude.

This summer we will be firing up our heat lamps to warm the tundra, watering the tundra to simulate increased rainfall. Contrary to the popular opinion that our snow fences would be decimated by the winter winds, the snow fences survived the winter winds increasing the depth of the snow pack on their lee side. So, we will also be studying the effects of increased snow on the tundra vegetation.

The survival of the snow fences might have something to do with a little known, but large-scale, mode of climate variability called the North Atlantic Oscillation or NAO. This is the El Nino of the northern latitudes and directly affects the climate at Thule. What is this and what does it tell us

about year-to-year climate variation?

The NAO is an index that is based on a difference in sea surface pressure between Iceland and the Azores, islands in the central Atlantic Ocean. A low pressure system constantly sits over Iceland, while a high pressure system maintains itself over the Azores. Some winters—and winters are key—the pressure differences are huge. When they are, the NAO index is positive, the eastern United States has a milder winter, and Greenland and Northern Europe have a harsh winter. Flip side, when the difference in the pressures is low, the NAO index is negative, the eastern United States has a severe winter, and Greenland and Northern Europe get less snow and warmer weather.

During this past winter the NAO index was negative. Our snow fences survived, and everyone at Thule got to enjoy a mild winter in Greenland. I suspect a mild Greenlandic winter still isn't all that pleasant for walks on the beach, but it is all relative to what the weather at Thule could have been like. Again winters are key, because that is the time period over which the pressure systems can differ the most.

So, the good news is that the winter

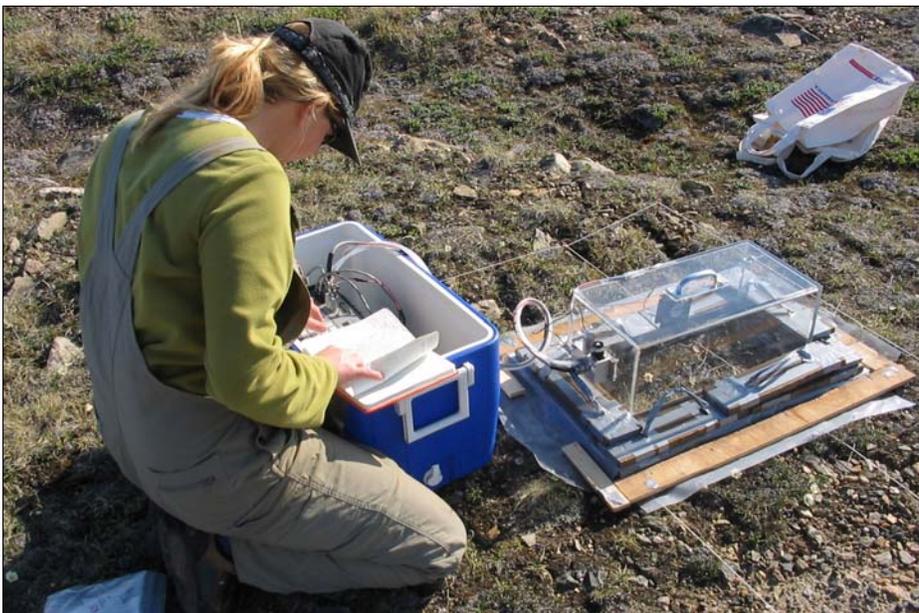
was mild. Unfortunately this often coincides with a year when the summers are cool and wet in Greenland.

Thus, the weather this summer could be quite different from last summer. Last summer was warm and dry and resulted in pretty low growth by the tundra vegetation. In a cool, wet summer, we expect the plants to grow more. Having contrasting summer weather is great for our research because it helps us better understand the effects of our climate manipulations. Unfortunately, it does still mean it could be wetter and cooler than any of us would like. Also, this is all based on a strong but not perfect relationship between the NAO index and weather, so there are no guarantees—just a means of forecasting.

To learn more on the NAO search for the “North Atlantic Oscillation” at Google.com. The best Web site I found in a recent search is listed below and did a great job describing the pressure differences that underlie this index and what it means for yearly climate patterns. http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Study/NAO/NAO_2.html

To learn more about the patterns of annual migration (other than of NSF scientists), come watch a critically acclaimed film titled “Winged Migration” that we will show in the community center soon after we arrive. The filmmakers comment that all the footage is real—real birds, in flight, traveling across Europe, North America, and Asia as they try to reach the vast Arctic landscapes where they feed and breed for the summer. The filmmakers flew in gliders side by side with the birds, so the birds appear to stay in place while the landscape moves behind them.

Along with showing this film, several other planned activities will provide a means for you all to meet the 2004 NSF crew and learn more about the natural history of the Arctic landscapes surrounding Thule Air Base.



Courtesy photo

Heidi Steltzer, National Science Foundation, records data during a research project focused on studying the biocomplexity of the arctic environment. NSF scientists will be staying at Thule throughout the summer to conduct research.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea

1st Lt. Lance Brenneke, 821st Support Squadron, along with his guide, Otto, begins the journey of a lifetime. Lt. Brenneke, along with Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea and Staff Sgt. Chris Knabe, spent six-days on the ice.

3 Airmen participate in dog sled expedition

1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers
821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

It's one thing to appreciate the hardened life of the Inuit; it's another to actually live it. Three tenderfoots Thuleites, 1st Lt. Lance Brenneke, Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea, and Staff Sgt. Chris Knabe, got a taste of arctic frontier life while on a six-day dog sledding expedition from Qaanaaq to Siorapaluk April 29-May 4.

Mr. Mogens Morgen, a Dane visiting Thule as a research project consultant as well as another tenderfoot, organized the expedition with the goal of showing a group of Americans how the Inuit live.

Initially, the trip was going to begin at Thule, however, due to poor sea ice conditions, the foursome flew north to Qaanaaq to meet up with four seasoned hunter guides: Otto, Thomas, Peter, and Christian.

"I had no idea what to expect," said Sgt. Knabe. What does a person do on a six-day expedition? What do you eat?

Where do you sleep? Are there other people out there?

Language barriers compounded the uncertainty—the hunters only spoke a few words of English and only one hunter spoke a little bit of Danish. None of the four travelers spoke Greenlandic and only Mr. Morgen spoke both Danish and English. With few words exchanged and few curiosities answered, each "city slicker" paired up with a hunter and dog sled and set off traversing the vast expanse of sea ice blanketing the waters of Baffin Bay.

"Expedition" continued on Page 4

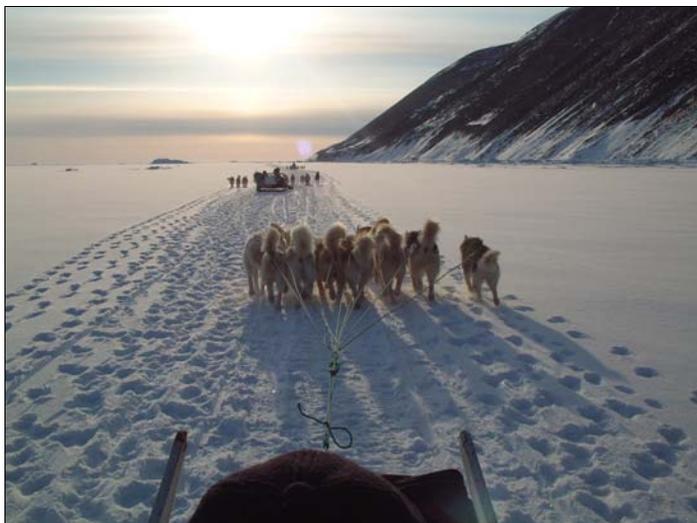


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea

Dog and sled tracks in the snow etch out a coastal sea ice "highway".



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea

Teams of 10 dogs pull some 400 lbs through the snow and ice during expeditions. Feeding time is much appreciated after a hard day's work.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Knabe

Old meets new. The Inuit tent, left, proved to be much warmer than the more modern tent the “city slickers” used their first night on the ice.

snow.

“Expedition” continued from Page 3

They traveled in a peaceful calm through the still frozenness. The only sound was that of the skids gliding over the snow and ice and the panting of the dogs. The clear air exposed miles and miles of the Greenland sublime, a landscape beautiful in its own right.

Lt. Brenneke kept track of waypoints using a handheld Global Positioning System unit. “Average speed was about 5 to 6 miles per hour,” said Brenneke. Not bad for 10 dogs pulling nearly 400 pounds through the

During the adventure, the tenderfoots ate a variety of dehydrated foods as well as more traditional Inuit food, such as seal, walrus, and dried fish. They melted ice for water and stored it in thermoses. With no showers available, the city slickers used baby wipes to “freshen up.”

The first night on the ice, the Inuit set up camp by first creating a platform with their dog sleds and then erecting a tent around it. The city slickers opted to set up a modern, “tested to -40 degrees Fahrenheit” tent on the ice. “That first night was cold,” said Sgt. Rea. “The hunters were in their tent laughing and

having a good time. We were in ours, freezing.”

The group learned an important lesson that first night: to trust the time-tested way of the Inuit. They also learned to let go of their rigidly scheduled Thule lives in favor of “nature’s schedule.”

There’s no concept of time on the ice, according to Sgt. Knabe. The group traveled by the light of the midnight sun, set up camp, ate dinner together, went to sleep around 2 a.m. and woke up around 9 or 10 a.m. each day.

On the second day of the trip, the tenderfoots came to realize how dog sleds are key to keeping transportation lines open among the northern towns, which otherwise have no connecting roads. Friday afternoon, the group traveled to Siorapaluk, one of the world’s northernmost civilian communities, where they were mobbed by about a dozen curious school children.

“They were cheerful and curious,” said Sgt. Knabe. “I think I gave a dozen piggyback rides that day. The teacher tried to round the kids up a couple of times, but finally gave up and let the kids play.”

“Expedition” continued on Page 5



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Knabe

1st Lt. Lance Brenneke poses with a child from Siorapaluk, one of the world’s northernmost civilian communities.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Knabe

Children from Siorapaluk “mobbed” the three Airmen during the dog sledding expedition. Here, Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea poses with some of the children, who took a break from school to meet the visitors.

“Expedition” continued from Page 4

After a few hours in Siorapaluk, the group traveled toward the edge of the sea ice. They set up camp; this time, the tenderfoots abandoned their modern-style tent in favor of staying in the Inuit tents. “It was so much warmer,” said Lt. Brenneke. “The sleds keep you off of the ice and pelts laid out on top of the sleds act as cushioning and extra insulation.”

The next morning, Saturday, the four experienced all the work and challenges faced during a hunting expedition. In the summertime, hunters can launch their boats from land directly into the open water to fish or hunt. However, winter’s cold creates miles of sea ice separating land from open water. Dog sleds are a necessary tool for hunters to traverse the ice and close the distance between land and open water. In short, dog sleds put food on the table...it’s that simple.

Once they reached the ice’s edge, the hunter’s made use of boats moored on the ice between Siorapaluk and the open water. Anyone in the community can use the boats, which left the tenderfoots appreciating the sense of trust and teamwork that exists among the Inuit...a necessity for survival.

Using their dog sleds, the hunters

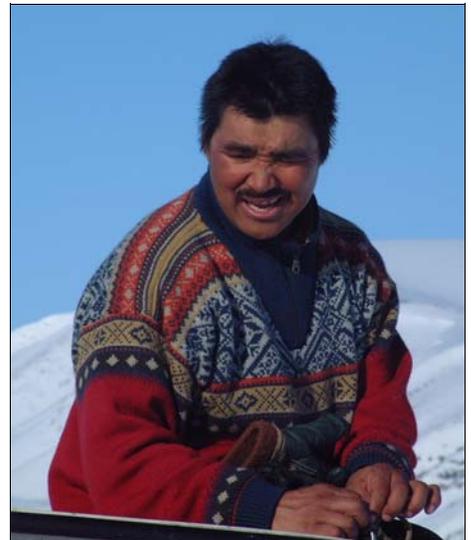


Photos by Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea

Hunters stand at the edge of the sea ice looking for seal.

pulled a boat to the ice’s edge and then set out on the labyrinth of broken-up coastal sea ice to hunt seals; the tenderfoots shadowed their Inuit guides. By day’s end, the hunters claimed three seal while the city slickers took in the experience and the sights—the rocky landscape, massive ice bergs, seals bobbing in the open water.

Sunday, the group began the journey back to Qaanaaq, but first, they returned to Siorapaluk, where they were once again mobbed by the local children. “I taught one of the kids a



Above: Thomas, Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea’s guide. Below, an iceberg juts out of the edge of the sea ice.

“Expedition” continued on Page 6



While hunting, the expeditioners took boats out through a “labyrinth” of sea ice—a maze cut out from the ice sheet breaking up.





Photos by Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea

Left: 1st Lt. Lance Brenneke and Otto during the return trip to Qaanaaq. Right: Staff Sgt. Chris Knabe takes a break with the hunter guides. "I'll probably never have a chance to do something like this again," said Sgt. Knabe of his experience during the six-day expedition.

"Expedition" continued from Page 5

handshake the first time we went through the town," said Sgt. Knabe. "When we arrived again, that same kid came up to me and remembered that handshake."

It began to snow lightly that weekend. Taking precautions not to get stranded in a possible storm, the group decided to mush their way to some nearby shelters that were like small ice-fishing huts.

By this time, the group had assimilated to a degree to the frontier life of the Inuit; they were comfortable, at peace. However, that peace was broken slightly by the sound of a plane flying overhead: "It made us realize that our trip was coming to an end. It brought us back to reality," said Sgt.

Knabe.

The group returned to Qaanaaq Monday and stayed overnight in the town's hotel, where they reviewed photographs and videos taken during the trip. Nostalgia began to set in. "I'll probably never have a chance to do something like this again," said Sgt. Knabe. "Hunting the seals and seeing the children in Siorapaluk were the highlights for me...I'll remember this trip for the rest of my life."

After six days of living on the ice, the four city slickers reflected on their experience with a fond appreciation of the culture they were immersed in. "We adapted to their lifestyle," said Sgt. Rea.

Sgt. Knabe summed it up in one word: "Surreal."



Courtesy photo

The Group: left to right—1st Lt. Lance Brenneke with his guide, Otto; Staff Sgt. Chris Knabe with Christian; Mr. Mogens Morgen with Peter; and Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea with Thomas.

Thule provides emergency care to ‘neighbors’

Doctor performs appendectomy on Savigsivik youth

1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers
821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

Though our neighbors are spread out to the north and south of us, separated by miles of difficult terrain, Thule and the Qaanaaq Community live right “next door” when it comes to common goals of friendship, cooperation, and helping out a friend in need.

A recent medical evacuation of a young Greenlandic girl from Savigsivik showed just how quickly the Qaanaaq Community neighborhood can come together to take care of one another.

Savigsivik, about 60 miles south of Thule, receives medical services from the doctor in Qaanaaq, a traveling doctor who services the entire Qaanaaq community. In early March, the doctor received a phone call from Savigsivik about an 11-year-old girl experiencing intense abdominal pain for three days.

Suspecting an appendicitis, the doctor provided what medical advice he could over the telephone, and then called his neighbors to the south—Thule—for assistance with a medevac.

“We’re not going to turn anybody down,” said Dr. Steen Erik Holm, a general surgeon here. “When there’s a request or if somebody shows up at our door—we’re going to help them.” Thule provides medevac and emergency care to the Qaanaaq community about a dozen times each year.

Dr. Holm and Helene Heldgaard, a nurse at Thule’s hospital, immediately set the medevac in motion, getting Air Greenland involved in prepping the flight and arranging for a translator to assist once they returned from the mission.

Just two hours after receiving the call from the doctor in Qaanaaq, Dr. Holm and Ms. Heldgaard were in Savigsivik assisting their patient and

putting her on the helicopter for the return to Thule.

“She was in immense pain, doubling over,” said Dr. Holm.

The vibration during the helicopter flight intensified the pain, which Dr. Holm and Ms. Heldgaard tried to relieve by cushioning the girl with a sleeping bag.

After the short 45-minute return flight, an ambulance brought doctor and patient from the flight line to the hospital where the young girl was admitted. The hospital staff took a blood test of the girl which confirmed the suspected appendicitis; they prepped her for an appendectomy.

The surgery itself only took about 25 minutes. “The appendix had burst, so we removed it and flushed the area around it,” said Dr. Holm. “No problems.” The doctor and nurse made



Dr. Steen Erik Holm

the entire operation seem as routine as tying one’s shoes. However, the situation could have been much worse in the absence of timely detection, notification, and treatment. “People can die from appendicitis,” said the doctor.

After surgery, the girl was taken to the recovery room, where her mother and sister were able to be with her. All together, the family stayed at Thule for nine days, during which time they were visited by many Greenlanders here who prepared traditional meals for the family.

During the Thule Air Base Open House in early April, Dr. Holm actually met the young girl’s uncle, who said his niece had fully recovered; in appreciation for his service, the man took Dr. Holm on a dog sled ride around North Star Bay.

“Team Thule is committed to helping out others in times of need,” said Col. Thomas Walker, 821st Air Base Group commander. “After all, that’s what neighbors do.”

Volunteer opportunity at BX



Photo by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

Capt. Jeff Thomas, airfield operations flight commander, stocks fruits and vegetables at the Base Exchange. The BX is looking for volunteers to assist with stocking from 2 to 4 p.m., Mondays and Thursdays. Those interested should call Master Sgt. Rick Shaffer, Thule Air Base first sergeant, at 2734.

Photo by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

Master Sgt. Robert Thivierge, 109th Air National Guard, checks his progress in dredging out an iceway. The 109th spent a week at Thule flying missions and practicing building an iceway.

109th Air National Guard trains at Thule Air Base

1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

Thule's three-week ski season too short? Six-hundred feet of downward slope not cutting it? If so...take off, eh!—with the members of the 109th Air National Guard.

It's ski season all year for members of the 109th, the only Air Force unit that flies the ski-equipped LC-130H aircraft.

The guardsmen from Scotia, New York, traveled to Thule in late March to perform sea ice skiway construction training in North Star Bay. Due to poor sea ice conditions in the past, this was the first time since 1999 the unit has been able to conduct the training, said Master Sgt. Robert Thivierge, 109th ANG.

Camped out on 4 feet of sea ice, the guardsmen spent two days dredging out a 2,000 foot training skiway with their snowmobiles. For some, it was their first time creating a skiway, training that is vital to the unit's operations. Attention to detail is key—though foreign objects may not be an issue on the void ice, a slight bump in a skiway can rip the skis clean off an LC-130.

Thule supports the 109th by providing base services, such as billeting and transportation, as well as use of base supply and storage facilities, said Tech. Sgt. Charles Dickens, Thule's Support Agreement Manager.

The 109th ANG provides worldwide airlift of personnel and equipment using C-130H and LC-130H aircraft and they conduct ski operations on ice caps and polar ice fields in both the Arctic and Antarctic. Their motto: "Global Reach from pole to pole"—109'ers quip "We're bi-polar."

Resupplying polar scientific researchers is the unit's primary responsibility; however, they also perform sustained search and rescue missions in the polar regions.

The 109th earned world-wide press coverage and acclaim in 1999 when they successfully performed a dangerous medical evacuation of a doctor at Amundsen-Scott Research Station, Antarctica, who discovered she had breast cancer and needed treatment.

Photo by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

Some members of the 109th slept out on the ice during their iceway training.

Igloo building: a lesson in life

1st Lt. Dave Curb

821st Support Squadron

On the afternoon of March 29 a hardy group of 'Team Thule's finest gathered on the side of a snow-covered hill in a secluded part of Thule (behind the DLO's house) to begin construction of what is believed to be the original Arctic dwelling, an igloo.

Anticipation ran high that frigid afternoon for many of these people had never even seen an actual igloo, let alone built one. Armed only with saws and shovels to break through the frozen, packed snow the team of approximately 20 Americans and 10 Danes set out on their mission: build an authentic igloo using teamwork and traditional methods. It is said that one Inuit can build an average sized igloo in 1-2 hours. This team was hoping to accomplish that same feat with 30 people. It should have been a piece of cake, right? Hardly.

The day began with the team dividing up into two smaller groups. There was a group who stayed at the site and their job was to mark the center of the igloo with a stick, then using twine attached to the center marker, much like a crude compass, a circular perimeter was established. The other group used their saws to cut ice blocks out of the packed snow. These ice blocks would later be placed and stacked on the circular perimeter of the igloo to become the outside walls.

One problem that became apparent immediately was the lack of standards in the size of the ice blocks. Ice blocks of every imaginable size, shape, and weight were cut. This would prove to be a major problem later on in the project.

With the ice blocks cut and the perimeter established, the task of laying and stacking the blocks began. The first row

of blocks went down relatively easy with Tech. Sgt. Eric "I work for a living" McClure taking charge. His job was to shape and cut the blocks so they fit together smoothly and stacked easily. After completing several rows of blocks, things were going slow but steady when the rest of the members of the team started getting a little impatient and began stacking blocks on the opposite side of the igloo. The idea being with two groups working the blocks could be stacked twice as fast.

The problem of the unstandardized blocks came into play at this point as one side working on the igloo selected blocks of various size and shapes that didn't match what was being used for the other side. By the time the two sides came together in the middle of the igloo the rows would not match up making it impossible to add a roof. An important lesson was learned that day.

Fortunately, the project was not a total bust as halfway through the build a "renegade" cell of a few frustrated individuals broke away from the main team to begin a more modest version of the original igloo design, a "doghouse" if you will. This team took a more manageable approach with their scaled-down design allowing construction to proceed much more rapidly.

Also by having the "ice quarry" right next to the build site the project engineer, 1st Lt. Lance "Iceman" Brenneke was able to oversee the block cutters, ensuring blocks were cut to a precise standard. "Iceman" was also the sole block stacker, which reduced confusion and increased uniformity throughout every row.

In life, much as in igloo building, bigger is not necessarily better. When things aren't going well and everyone around you seems confused and disoriented; sometimes a little perspective is all that is needed. Take a step back, assess the situation, learn from your mistakes, and simply begin again.



Photo by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

Tech. Sgt. Chad Keller, 821st Support Squadron, works on an igloo during a teambuilding exercise.

AFSPC leads in implementing sexual assault response, prevention programs

Capt. Angie Blair

A.F. Space Command Public Affairs

Air Force Space Command is leading the way in establishing command-wide standardized sexual assault education, training and prevention programs following an Air Force-directed major command sexual assault team assessment that concluded March 31.

"We found that everybody understood the issue, but there were better ways to do things as we looked across the command," said General Lance Lord, Commander of AFSPC.

The 13-member AFSPC assessment team identified several best practices, four of which are scheduled to be implemented by the end of June, according to General Lord:

- A responsible drinking program from F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., designed to promote a responsible drinking culture;
- Educational prevention and reporting videos and briefings for training personnel used at Vandenberg AFB, Calif.;
- Strong local law enforcement and base organization relationships that help keep the base informed of sexual assault reports at Los Angeles AFB, Calif.; "Every unit we have in the command has good contacts with local communities, but what we saw at Los Angeles was best of the breed—so we're going to try to implement their practices," said General Lord.
- A checklist for responding to an incident used at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. "They [Patrick AFB] have a great commanders' incident and response checklist—a memory jogger for commanders and first sergeants that reminds them of the steps to take, the people to notify and how quickly these steps should be done," said the general.

The AFSPC assessment effort was

Military Working Dog trains at Thule

Photo by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers
Staff Sgt. Jennifer McDonald works with Astrid, a military working dog, to search for possible narcotics. A working dog team came up from McGuire AFB, New Jersey, and spent a week at Thule conducting Arctic training and common area inspections. Astrid is specially trained to detect a variety of narcotics. An agreement between Thule and McGuire makes it possible for working dogs to visit the base periodically to provide support and conduct training.



part of an Air Force-wide review of procedures in place to deal with sexual assaults and was directed by Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. James G. Roche, and the Air Force Chief of Staff, General John P. Jumper following sexual assault allegations and handling of sexual assault cases surfaced at the Air Force Academy in February 2003.

"Air Force Space Command and the United States Air Force take sexual assault very seriously," said General Lord. "Our team was tasked to make sure we are doing everything in our power to prevent it from happening and that if prevention does fail we insure a climate where it is reported and dealt with in a sensitive, appropriate and timely manner."

Space Command's assessment team, led by Col. Robert Worley, AFSPC mission support director, consisted of a mix of men and women—five officers, four enlisted Airmen and four civilians. The team conducted focus group discussions, leadership interviews, documentation reviews, open-door opportunities and meetings with key organizations during their month-long

assessment tour.

"Our goal was to provide senior leaders with a candid assessment of best practices, special issues, problems, and challenges," said Colonel Worley. "This was not about investigating specific cases or allegations but we were tasked to look at policies and procedures in place for both reporting and dealing with sexual assault."

AFSPC's SAAT report will be combined with other Air Force major command reports that will provide Air Force leadership with an overall "state of health" on sexual assault programs, procedures and policies and identify areas for improvement and highlight existing best practices.

"We want to give everyone an equal chance to prosper in Air Force Space Command and our Air Force," said General Lord. "Professionals treat each other with respect. And if they don't, we work to take the proper and appropriate action against the perpetrator while taking care of the victim. Sexual assault in Air Force Space Command will not be tolerated at any level."

Airman crush NCOs during quarterly appreciation event

Senior Airman Josh Moyer
821st Support Squadron

Living and dying with every launch from the floor, the NCOs toed the line between greatness and disaster like no other team at Thule.

It was an evening filled with intensity, passion and competitiveness. A game that truly began in a motivational e-mail battle; resulted in history being made at the Thule Air Base Fitness Center. The smallest ever airman basketball team that has played at Thule played with a passion larger than the team itself.

The "Furious Five" dominated the boards with Tyler Eldred's furious rebounds; John Ortiz's outstanding hustle resulted in steals that came out of the mere blue. Durrel Ward also added to the fire with his peculiar yet accurate jump shots and passes.

Down in the pane Joshua Moyer battled with the restless and powerful NCOs, overcoming the challenge of being the "little man" on the inside. And of course the most valuable player of the game, Jared Austin, made the

game complete, with his All-Star jump shots, lay-ups and passes that completely took the game on a different level; he propelled the team to new heights.

Despite being undermanned, the airmen had just enough of the right team combination to win.

The NCOs, however, gave the airmen a run for their money. Eugene Vesey, Steven Keith, Stacey Pennix, John Franklin, Christopher Sloan, Keith Turney, Jason Sawicki, Corey Burnett, Curtis Huffman and Coach Michael Whisnant's attempts to strategize and hustle the floor were all great attempts. However, it wasn't enough to yield the healthy record for the airmen.

The explosive scoring and hustle by Vesey, Keith, Burnett, Franklin, Turney and Pennix at halftime had the airmen in somewhat of a bind at the half. But airmen coach Jared Austin never doubted the dedication of his fellow teammates to bring in the win.

It was great competition on both sides

This was a game truly filled with teamwork from all members of Team



Photos by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

The gravity-defying Jared Austin performs a lay-up as his NCO opponents can do nothing else but look on. Thule's airmen and NCOs played Basketball as a quarterly airmen appreciation event—the airmen won the game 61-39.

Thule. For the airmen, they took great pride in earning bragging rights during yet another Airman/NCO appreciation event. Better luck next time NCOs.

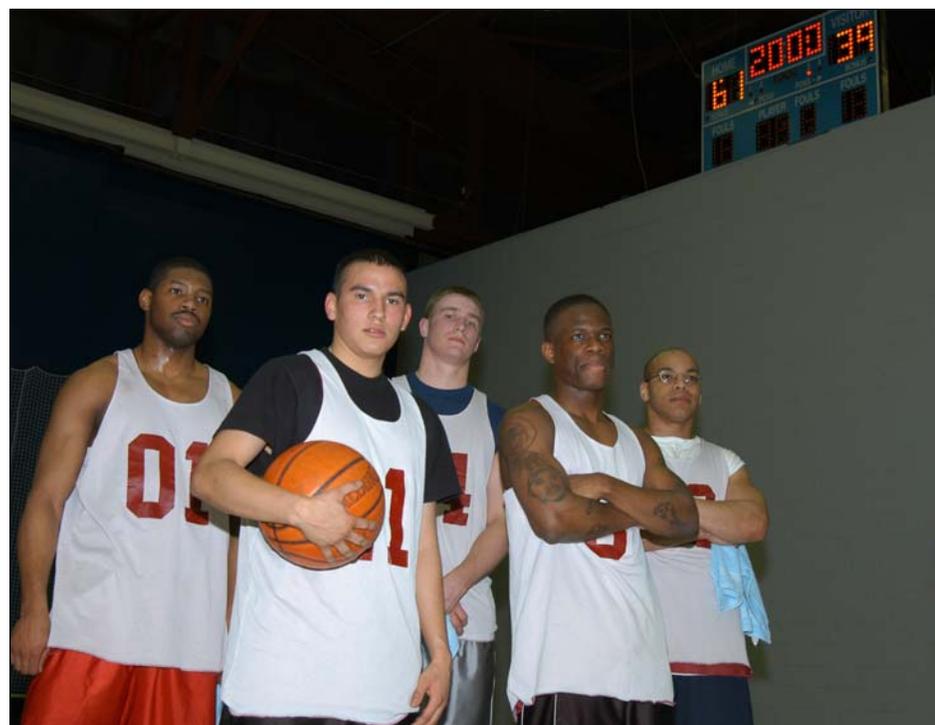


Photo by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

The winning team: Jared Austin, John Ortiz, Tyler Eldred, Durrel Ward, and Josh Moyer.



BOXTOP Olympics

Photos by Senior Airman Stephen Huffman
BOXTOP Olympics, pitting Canadians from Station Alert against members of Team Thule, wrapped up with the Canadians taking top honors. Clockwise from top left: Tech. Sgt. Tom Davis plays floor hockey at Canadian Forces Station Alert. Tech. Sgt. Eric Balogh takes part in a messy "Fear Factor"-type challenge during the competition. Finally, the Olympics participants pose at Alert. **BOXTOP Olympics** are scheduled to take place during each semiannual Operation **BOXTOP**.



Thule Toastmasters open to all on base

By 1st Lt. George Sconyers
 821st Air Base Group

Thule Toastmasters is under way with over 10 members from Team Thule. Recently during a regularly scheduled meeting, Tech. Sgt. Dawn Moninger came out for the first time and volunteered for a Table Topics speech. The impromptu speech ended promptly after 1 minute, a bit short of the 1 minute 30 second goal. However, second go-round was perfect with a 2-minute speech.

The Thule Toastmasters-ish Club is an open forum open to all personnel at Thule regardless of rank, ethnicity, or any other factor, which one could come up with. In fact, this is just the type of environment we would encourage. Speeches coming from different people from different backgrounds in an environment where each individual can learn a bit about his neighbor while improving upon his own skills.

If you are a security forces technical sergeant or below Master Sgt. Huffman has made quite an offer. He has stated

that he will reimburse \$20 should you join and participate for 6 months. That means your dues are a measly \$15. Hopefully other supervisors will follow suit and encourage their troops to take advantage of this outstanding professional development opportunity.

If you are interested in how a meeting runs, come to the TOW Club at 7:30 p.m. on any Wednesday; we promise to be done by 8:30 a.m.. Questions can be directed to either 1st Lt. George Sconyers, x2711, or Capt. Kel Hannum, x3271.

Guardian Challenge champions announced— 21 SW best in space ops!

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AFPN) -- The scores are in. Teams from 21st Space Wing, 91st SW and 45th SW garnered top honors at Air Force Space Command's Guardian Challenge 2004.

Trophies were presented to AFSPC's top space and missile warriors during a ceremony here May 6.

The 21st SW at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., earned the Aldridge Trophy, which is awarded to the best space operations wing.

The 91st SW at Minot AFB, N.D., took home the Blanchard Trophy for best intercontinental ballistic missile space wing.

The 45th SW at Patrick AFB, Fla., captured the Schriever Trophy for best space-launch wing.

Other winners include:

- Best code controllers: 341st SW at Malmstrom AFB, Mont.

- Best chefs: 90th SW at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo.

- Best helicopters: 341st SW.

- Best space communications: 460th Air Base Wing at Buckley AFB, Colo.

- Best missile communications: 91st SW.

- Best security forces team: 91st SW.

- Best space-launch maintenance team: 30th SW here.

- Best missile maintenance team: 341st SW.

- Best space-launch operations crew: 45th SW.

- Best space operations crew: 20th Space Control Squadron at Eglin AFB, Fla.

- Best missile operations crew: S-261 from the 91st SW.

- Best missile operations team: 91st SW.

- Best space operations team: 21st SW.

Guardian Challenge assesses Air Force Space Command's mission readiness as teams from throughout the command challenge one another to determine which unit is the best of the best in their respective fields. The competition provides the testing ground for the combat



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt Jon Blackmon, from the 21st Space Wing, Peterson AFB Colo., jumps through "The Tough Nut" on the obstacle course portion of Guardian Challenge 2004 held at Vandenberg AFB, Calif. on May 5, 2004.

capabilities key to America's space and missile professionals while investing in esprit de corps, said officials.

Complete score listings and additional information on the week's competition can be found at www.vandenberg.af.mil/guardian_challenge.

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at Team Thule?**

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Base Color Guard!**

**For more info., call Staff
Sgt. Venessa Hernandez
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medal from your last
assignment at Patrick
AFB?**

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folks at home know
about it!**

**Fill out a Hometown
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by Public Affairs,
Bldg. 461, rm. 9, or
call 5678.**

Getting to know one of Team Thule's finest—an interview with Maline Peterson

Chaplain Buddy Walker
821st Air Base Group

There has been a lot of good discussion about Americans and Danes learning more about Greenlandic folks recently. A group of us, freshly back from the ice-covered bay on Easter weekend, were wondering why there aren't more opportunities like this for sharing ideas, history, culture, language and music between all our Thule neighbors.

How hard is it really, to break down a barrier—to get to know a person for who he or she is instead of with a title such as “those people” or “them”? Well, my personal history has taught me that the first step in that direction happens when you make friends with someone.

So, I thought it would be cool to visit with my friend, Maline and ask a few questions just to learn more about where she comes from, and who she is.

Buddy Walker (BW): OK, first of all, how do I pronounce your name properly?

Maline Petersen (MP): *Greenlandic folks would say it, Maliina, pronounced “Maleeeeeeeena” with the “a” sounding the way English speakers would say the “a” in apple.*

BW: Everybody knows you from the Dining Hall I'm sure, but most of us don't know that much about you beyond this one characteristic you have: you always smile. In fact I've heard some of our American troops who recognize you in the Club calling you “Happy”. Is that right?

MP: (Laughing) *I am also called “smiley” sometimes.*

BW: Well, that fits. Where were you born?

MP: *In the middle of Greenland on an island called Disko.*

BW: Like, Disco?

MP: *Suu.*

BW: Suu? OK, what's that mean?

MP: *Suu means “yes”.*

BW: We're communicating. Right on. (According to Maline, Disko had been a coal mining city. It was closed in 1972 and all the people relocated all over Greenland.)

MP: *It (the closure) scattered many friends and family.*

I grew up in Disko until I turned 14. Then, I had to go to Denmark for school at Ikast.

Three to four months after 9th Grade, I attended clerk school and learned accounting skills, administrative tasks, office machines, etc.



Photo by Chaplain Buddy Walker

Maline Peterson at the Thule Air Base Open House.

That was for three years. Then, I took an internship in Greenland at Sisimiut; then it was back to the classroom in Denmark...off and on for three more years. After graduation, I worked in Sisimiut 1 year. Then, I moved to Aasiaat to join my family—they had moved there after Disko closed.

I started work in an office of, how do you say, the “rathaus”?

BW: Oh, you're speaking German again!

MP: *Yes!*

BW: If I remember right, that's like a building for public records or offices, right?

MP: *Yes.*

BW: What was family life like on Disko?

MP: *I had one big brother. Mother. Father. Grandfather, my “Aataa” (Greenlandic for “grandfather”). One little sister. All*

living with us.

BW: When did your day start? What was a typical day for you like back then?

MP: *When I was 7 years old, I liked skiing and sled dogs and building snow houses outside our house. I cared for the puppies in my little snow house—father's smaller dogs were mine to care for. He would say, “You can't control these dogs...they're too big.” Same with his sled (too big to control). He made a smaller one for me, maybe one and half meters long. It was easy for me to push; just made for one person.*

BW: Did your father make all his sleds?

MP: *Yes. Like Grandfather. Grandfather was a very great hunter in the next city below Thule—Upernavik. Many seals, whales, fish, birds, polar bears. He helped many people in Upernavik because he was very good with kayaks and dogsleds—known to have run with a kayak for many, many kilometers. There's a special name for a great hunter: “Qajarsuaq”. It means person who is very great at rowing kayak in any kind of weather—blowing snow, wind, rain—person can row to get help for people. He lived on the floor above mine in our house. I loved to be with him because he baked cakes, tell stories, and read books to me. I liked to watch him knit his own nets for the fish.*

BW: What were they made from?

MP: *Something like wool thread, rope-like, using special tools he made himself from tree wood and the “tooth” from a narwhal (she makes gestures indicating on her face the place where a narwhal horn is located).*

BW: I think a lot of people that have been out on the ice, like during the Thule Open House, were very interested in the dog sleds and they'd love to know more about them.

MP: *In summertime on Disko, you can also use sled dogs to pull your boat along the shore.*

“Maline” continued on Page 15



Photo by 1st Lt. George Sconyers
Inuit from the surrounding communities came to Thule April 10 for the Thule Air Base Open House. While here, base personnel were offered dog sled rides. Other activities included dog sled races and a dinner at the Community Center. The Open House brings all members of the Qaanaaq Community together annually as a means of building and strengthening community ties.

“Maline” continued from Page 14

BW: (As I listen to her describe how this is done, that amazing tendency kicks in for me toward finding some common reference point, some similarity that helps us relate to one another even though our lands of origin are so far apart. I draw a picture of an Erie Canal mule and its canal boat from a book I had read once as a child. Low and behold, Maline nods in complete recognition and confirms. This is the same idea. A long boat is attached by lines to the towing animals who simply walk along the bank pulling the boat, occupants and cargo along side them in the water.

MP: *Father started me out with one dog and one sled. I wanted more, but my father made me wait until later: “not until you know more what you are doing,” he said. He was concerned with safety. I got into sled dog racing about 10 years ago. I do not use our own family’s dogs--too dangerous. So, I use another person’s dogs. Father probably thought girls shouldn’t do racing, but I wanted to.*

BW: So, you were sort of a rebel? (She laughs.) Why did you want to race dogs, even though your dad didn’t think you should?

MP: *Because I like going fast! We have no car, so I love skiing and the dog sled racing. It feels good to move so fast...feels like freedom when you can just go with a friend, where you want, laughing—it is very fun. I like to go out; not staying in at home, doing nothing. Mother would have liked to teach me dishwashing and house working, but father said, “NO! My daughter will go out, play games, and do something else.” He wanted me*

to learn new ways, new things.

BW: Do you think young folks feel that way today?

MP: *Most young people in Greenland today would like to see more. They want to go to Europe or the U.S. to see more of the world. That’s why so many go to school in Denmark, Germany, even Canada or the U.S. Very good (opportunity). People learn languages and all about what they want to do after. It’s not same as the past. (Communities) seemed smaller (closer). People took more care of themselves and helped each other out more. More helping each other like my grandfather did. They had to work much, much harder. They used their bodies where now people use machines. Father had been a hunter when he was young, but my grandfather wanted him to learn more, so he became a painter. Still, my father would hunt and sell what he got.*

BW: Do many people do that today? The carpenters, painters, machine repairmen are also hunters?

MP: Yes. *People are still hunting.*

BW: What do you like best about Thule?

MP: *Differences. I had lived in Denmark for many years. I came up here for the first time three years ago this July. I’m happy to see Greenland...to see the sea, and great distance, fresh air; (feels) like home. I enjoy it very much. When I started to work in the dining hall, lots of people came to eat with many faces—I was a little bit shy. Now I am more relaxed and can stay focused. I smile and say “have a nice day.” But I have a fun time because I think it very interesting to meet American people, thinking about what they say and what I say before I say something. I have learned much more this way. I get sad when people I know have to go, but I know at*

Thule, they go.

I’ve met many good people. I write to a friend I made here and we send e-mail and pictures, so I get to see some friends still. I also enjoy educating Danish and American people in Greenlandic. And (I enjoy) singing. I have been a member of the choir in Copenhagen for 15 years and I help others with singing.

I reminded Maline that I had heard her sing for one of Father Antone’s (priest in Qaanaaq) worship services this past year. The choir then was only 4 or 5 people, but they harmonized so beautifully into a three-part rendition of a traditional Protestant hymn, adding a new sound that made me hear it in a whole new way.

As we parted company, I wondered about those differences Maline had spoken of. Most of us see those as obstacles, barriers or fences that separate us. Like the tables in the dining hall, or the words we use in conversations...separators. But I appreciate this notion, this attitude, and it inspires me as I reconsider our blessed, our lucky location here at Thule.

Differences can be seen as an invitation to learn more about the complexity of the human family. We’ve so much to learn from our differences, about all those innovative and ingenious methods of adaptability we activate for our families, our communities, ourselves, for survival, or sometimes, to truly savor Life by celebrating what, or who, is given to us in the here and now.

Thule Aggie Muster

Photo by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

1st Lt. Dave Curb reads the Texas A&M roll call with Chaplain Buddy Walker and Col. Thomas Walker—Thule's three Texas A&M graduates who gathered for "Muster" on April 21 (perhaps the northernmost Muster). Every year, graduates of Texas A&M gather to remember Aggies who died in the past year. The tradition of Muster has evolved throughout the school's history. In 1903 the Muster date was changed so that it could be held on San Jacinto Day, April 21, in commemoration of Texas' victory over Mexico at the Battle of San Jacinto. Tradition dictates: If there is an A&M graduate within 100 miles of you, you are expected to get together, eat a little, and live over the days you spent at the A&M College of Texas.



Airman now spelled with a capital 'A'

Gen. John Jumper
A.F. Chief of Staff

WASHINGTON (AFP) -- I am an Airman.

Note that is with a capital "A." It is just one letter at the beginning of the word, but it signifies a great deal. The reason it is capitalized is simple: Airmen in the United States Air Force are the heart and soul of our unique fighting force, and should be identified by a proper noun.

As young children, when we began to read, we learned a capital letter at the front of a word signified something special or important, like our own name, our hometown, and our country. This was reinforced throughout our education and professional life.

When we see a capital letter, our minds automatically emphasize that word, and we bestow an increased importance on that person, place, or thing.

It is time to formally add our profession to that list of important and special nouns.

You may have seen or heard something about my guidance to capitalize the word "Airman." It is appropriate to do so, in recognition of our rich history, and to emphasize our unparalleled role in the defense of America.

Our Air Force is the finest air and space force in the world because of the generations of professional Airmen who have devoted their lives to dominating the skies. Capitalizing the word "Airman"

recognizes their historic achievements and signifies our unique contributions to fighting and winning America's wars. It shows we have earned the respect a proper name imparts.

For 38 years of my life, I have been proud to wear the uniform of the United States Air Force. And, whether you have worn it as long as I have or have just recently joined our team, I know we all feel the same sense of pride.

Regardless of the uniform we wear, the specialty we hold, the badge over our pocket, and whether we are active duty, Guard, Reserve, or civilian, first and foremost, we are Airmen.

We are one Air Force and we are Airmen.

**12th Space Warning Squadron Change of Command Ceremony
3 p.m., May 27 at the TOW Club Ballroom
All are invited to attend**

Tips to getting fit!

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. (AFP)—Thousands of Americans will decide to get fit and lose weight; sorry, there are no short-term get-fit-quick plans. Here are some ideas:

First, change your attitude about fitness.

All too often, people think of exercise as punishment-painful, time consuming and obligatory. If this is how you feel, you have already set yourself up for failure. Instead, think of it as a chance to unwind from a stressful day; a little time all to yourself and a way to improve your quality of life.

If you are a beginner, start small. Try walking for 30 minutes three or four times a week. Take the stairs instead of the elevator and park in the back row of the parking lot. Aerobic programs on many bases also offer a “getting started” class. Once you are ready to increase your fitness level and need more of a challenge, pick a sport or activity that piques your interest. Try a kickboxing class, use a rock climbing wall, or train for a five- or 10-kilometer run.

Choose an exercise buddy who will hold you accountable and help motivate and encourage you. If your buddy can't make a workout session, you should still go. Stay the course and get your workout done.

Experts say anything done for 21 days is habit forming and when done for six months, becomes part of your personality. And don't forget, you will be motivating and encouraging your buddy at the same time.

Schedule your workouts as you would any other appointment and commit to them. Make it a convenient time like when the kids have left for school or as soon as you get off work. If your job allows you time to work out during the day, take advantage of the time. You will go back to work feeling



Photo by 1st Lt. George Sconyers

Staff Sgt. Michael Whisnant, 821st Security Forces Squadron, practices his CPR-techniques during a recent class at the base hospital. Base fitness leaders must take a CPR class before being fully-qualified to lead PT.

rejuvenated.

Use the facilities you have around you, like the base gym and its excellent equipment. There are always a variety of group fitness classes, including step aerobics, spinning, kickboxing, yoga and Pilates to pick from.

Set attainable goals for yourself and write them in a journal. Track your progress, workouts and meals in it. This gives you a visual record of your strengths and weaknesses and acts as a guide to show you where you need to work a little harder or make course corrections.

Reward yourself after attaining a goal. Buy a new pair of shoes for sticking to your first week of workouts, get a massage after you have lost your first 5 pounds, buy a new outfit for working up to 25 push-ups, take a vacation for dropping two clothing sizes. You deserve this.

If your goal is to lose weight, avoid getting on the scale day after day. Your weight fluctuates as much as eight pounds between morning and night. You may be retaining water or it may be that you have added on lean muscle mass, which weighs more than fat. Do an initial weigh in and taping, then repeat this every six weeks to check

your progress. In between weigh-ins, depend on the mirror and the way your clothes fit to see if you are making positive strides.

Be prepared to work out whenever you have time. Keep a gym bag packed and readily accessible so you don't have to scramble before a workout. Pack your lunch to avoid the trip through the fast food drive through. If you get the munchies halfway through your day, load your office fridge with healthy snacks and water. Be prepared for minor setbacks that can hinder your workout and diet, like sickness or schedule changes. Make adjustments if you can, or simply pick back up where you left off.

Learn healthy eating habits. Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables and drink eight eight-ounce glasses of water a day. Switch to whole wheat and whole grain breads, rice and pasta.

Also, eating a variety of healthy, natural foods helps the body to recover from workouts faster and allows you to train harder. Don't skip meals. It can slow your metabolism and hinder weight loss. Health and Wellness Centers have pamphlets on healthy eating.

The Lighter Side of Thule



Photos by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

Eat your vegetables...Chaplain Buddy Walker gives a disgusted look at two broccoli crowns while stocking at the BX. Left: Thule's resident clown—Capt. Kel Hannum—in DCUs in front of bldg 461 on April Fool's Day.



Photos by 1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers

Once again, gracing the back page, is Capt. Kel Hannum sporting a 70's-style wig for Boxtop Olympics. Left: Shirt—With only days left, I had to get a picture of you in the paper; here he is stocking tomatoes with Debra Bills.

Have a photograph or story for the Thule Times?
Submit it to
ThuleTimes@thule.af.mil

Thule Times Editorial Staff

Col. Thomas Walker, 821st Air Base Group commander
1st Lt. Jeremy Eggers, chief, public affairs
Add your name here as a staff writer!—call PA at 5678

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