

IN THE NEWS

HAWC ready to help; don't let another year go up in smoke!

**Commentary by
Tech. Sgt. Rick A. Lang
Health and Wellness Center**

Are you one of those smokers who want to quit? Here is your chance!

November has been identified as the month of the "Great American Smokeout." The smokeout is designed to encourage smokers to give up cigarettes for 24-hours. During the 1998 GASO, 19 percent of the estimated 48 million American smokers either quit or reduced their smoking for the day.

The Surgeon General identifies cigarette smoking as the single most preventable cause of premature death in the United States. Each year more than 400,000 Americans die from cigarette smok-

ing. In fact, one in every five deaths in the United States is smoking related. Every year smoking kills more than 276,000 men and 142,000 women.

To bring this issue even closer to home, 92 percent of the 1,073 self-reported tobacco users on Charleston AFB are E-1 through E-7. What impact does this have on the CAFB community? The health risks are evident — colds, lung disease and cancer.

Consider the following: According to the American Cancer Society, the average smoker smokes 1.5 packs of cigarettes per day. Each cigarette takes approximately

seven minutes to smoke. The average smoker will smoke an average of eight cigarettes during the duty day. If we add the numbers, seven minutes times eight cigarettes equals 56 minutes per day, less two 15 minute breaks per day equals 26 minutes per day. Over a one-year period, this equals 13 work days lost per person per year to smoke breaks.

When we apply these American Cancer Society statistics to the number of active duty smokers here, there are 13,949 duty days lost per year due to tobacco use.

According to a 1995 ar-

ticle released by the DOD, direct healthcare costs attributed to smoking were estimated at approximately \$584 million. Smoking attributable disease in the total DOD population accounted for one in six deaths, about 16 percent, and 200,211 hospital bed days to include 9,239 bed days for active-duty personnel.

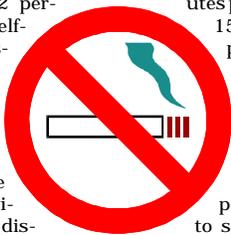
Recognizing that there is a continuing need for tobacco cessation at CAFB, the Health and Wellness Center is sponsoring an Adopt-a-Smoker campaign. During the campaign, individuals volunteer to help a person stop using tobacco throughout the course of the Great American Smokeout Thursday. It's easy; the volunteer simply agrees to be an extra sup-

portive friend during the 24-hour smokeout.

Many groups offer advice to help smokers quit for good. Non-smokers can join the fun by adopting family members, friends and co-workers who smoke, and encourage them to quit.

During November, the HAWC will be conducting various activities to include: Tobacco Cessation classes with nicotine replacement therapy and Zyban, a Turkey Trot/Walk and information packets for all who participate.

To participate in the Great American Smokeout, obtain adoption papers for a smoker or receive information about these or other prevention programs, call the HAWC at 256-4007.



Virtual MPF available at Charleston AFB, anywhere

**By Senior Airman
Jason Smith
437 AW Public Affairs**

Charleston AFB members now have access to the virtual Military Personnel Flight.

The Air Force Personnel Center has established the vMPF to allow its users to get personnel support and accomplish personnel transactions using the Internet instead of making a trip to Bldg. 503.

"The vMPF allows you to conduct personnel business online and at any time, day or night, from anywhere, easing the interruption to your personal schedule," said Capt. Robin McKinley, 437th Mission Support Squadron military personnel flight commander. "Right now, it allows you to retrieve information directly from the personnel database. For example, you no longer have to visit the MPF to get a Proof of Service Letter for a mortgage application. Now,

you can pull it directly from your own computer at home, or even from the real estate office."

Along with the Proof of Service Letter, CONUS Isolated Assignment Applications, Join Spouse Applications and Initial Separation or Retirement Briefings are just a few of the other things available on the system.

"The vMPF is useful when you're on leave or TDY and you need to accomplish a personnel transaction," said Master Sgt. Russell McCray, 437 MSS superintendent of outbound assignments and formal training. "It makes life easier by giving you the opportunity to conduct personnel business from anywhere without being physically located near an MPF."

The system is offered to all Air Force members, active and reserve, who sign up for it.

"Go to the vMPF website at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/km/vMPF/vMPFHelpHome.htm, and logon to the secure server," said McKinley. "You will then be asked to create a unique user ID and password."

After registering, McKinley said the vMPF is secure and available from anywhere that has Internet access.

"It's protected by the latest security technology," McKinley said. "All information you send over the Internet is encrypted and unreadable by anyone else."

"You can access the vMPF from any computer with Internet capability. This can be done in the comfort of your own home, at your deployed location, at your parent's home or even from your neighborhood cyber-cafe."

For more information, call McKinley at 963-4461.

Gen. Robertson gives Veterans Day message

**By Gen. Charles T. Robertson
Commander in Chief, U.S. Transportation Command, and Commander, Air Mobility Command**

This Veterans Day, we pause to give thanks to the brave men and women who have honorably served in the defense of our great nation. Veterans Day began as Armistice Day in 1926 by an Act of Congress to honor veterans of World War I.

In 1954, Congress officially changed the name to Veterans Day to honor all soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen and Coast Guardsmen who have served our nation throughout her history.

From the Revolutionary War to the host of far-flung contingency, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations underway today, our great traditions of dedication to duty and defense of our Constitution are assured by a force that honors all who have served.

The men and women of U.S. Transportation Command and her component commands — Air Mobility Command, Military Sealift Command, and Military Traffic Management Command — epitomize the core values which have made our nation's veterans great: patriotism, dedication to duty, and an absolute commitment to freedom.

I am proud to acknowledge our veterans on this day. We continue to be inspired by your example of selfless service and thankful for your tremendous dedication and sacrifice.



Graphic by Senior Airman Jason Smith

(Left, computer screen) Senior Airman Nikki Irvin and Airman 1st Class Jenny Collins, both from the 437th Mission Support Squadron, promote vMPF.