

the COMPASS

Your guide to Italy and beyond

Jan. 20, 2012

Aviano Air Base, Italy

Grotta Gigante:

Trieste's
Underground
cavern

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New child
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Lefty loosey, righty tighty

Airman 1st Class Lorenzo Gaskins, 603rd Air Control Squadron ground radar systems journeyman, performs maintenance on a TPS-75 Radar System Jan. 5 at Aviano Air Base, Italy. The 603rd ACS is a mobile unit capable of providing radar surveillance and control anywhere in the world. Members of the 603rd ACS also collect, display, and disseminate aerial activity information.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Jenay Randolph

Flybys

Family Advocacy classes announces

The Aviano Family Advocacy program announces the following parenting and relationship enhancement programs and classes for January:

- Mom and Tots Playgroup - Every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to noon
- Anger/Stress Management classes - Every Tuesday at 9 a.m.
- The New Parent Support program also provides pregnancy and parenting support.
- Family advocacy strength-based therapy is available for couples needing relationship counseling and support.

For more information or to sign up for a class, call DSN 632-5667.

Dolomite Winter Games Jan. 27-29

The 2012 Dolomiti Winter Games take place Jan. 27-29 in Claut Valcellina, Pordenone. The events include cross country, giant ski, alpinism ski, curling, descent and tubes. For more information call Sergio Gingillino at 335-779-1038.

31st FW recognizes 'best of the best'

The 31st Fighter Wing hosts an annual awards banquet 5:30 p.m. Feb. 3 at La Bella Vista Club. Deadline to purchase ticket is Jan. 30. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact unit first sergeant.

Red Cross offers CPR classes

The Aviano American Red Cross offers the following classes in Building 224 at Area 2: Free infant CPR class is available for expecting and new parents from 5-6:30 p.m. Feb. 15; and CPR and first aid class is available 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 18. For more information, call DSN 632-557.

Emergency Numbers

112- Carabinieri, Fire Department, Medical
911- On-Base emergencies (0434-30-8911 if from a commercial line)
0434-30-3100 - Command Post
DSN 632-3172 - Aviano Straight Talk Line
(0434-30-3172 if from a commercial line)

Cover photo by Staff Sgt. Justin Weaver

the COMPASS

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Deadline info: *The deadline for submitting information is close of business Thursday one week prior to publication. Send all information by e-mail to the Compass at avianonews@aviano.af.mil. Faxed articles will not be accepted. The public affairs office is located in Bldg. 1413, Rm. 113. The Compass staff can be reached at DSN 632-7555.*

Local open air market schedule

Photo by Senior Airman Katherine Windish



Monday

Maniago, Azzano Decimo, Vittorio Veneto, Trieste

Tuesday

Aviano, Casarsa, Codroipo, San Quirino, Trieste,
Lignano

Wednesday

Pordenone, Budoia, San Daniele, Cordignano,
Oderzo, Trieste

Thursday

Roveredo, Fontanafredda, Fiume Veneto, Sacile,
Trieste

Friday

Conegliano, Cordenons, Porcia, San Vito al
Tagliamento, Trieste, Latisana, Montebelluna

Saturday

Pordenone, Spilimbergo, Treviso, Trieste

Flybys Continued

Transportation strikes in Italy

Travelers should be aware of the following upcoming Italian transportation strikes and plan accordingly. People should note that strikes can be canceled or shifted without notice and at any moment.

- Local buses and trams will be on a 24-hour strike beginning Jan. 27, at different times depending on the specific location.
- Alitalia personnel will be on strike from 1:30-5:30 p.m. Jan. 27. Check with ticket office whether this affects your flight.

School accepts Sure Start applications

The Aviano Elementary School is accepting Sure Start applications. The program is an exemplary, research-based preschool program that serves military children and their families living overseas. It is modeled on the stateside program, Head Start. Sure Start provides transportation to a daily classroom program that includes a nutritional lunch, social service support, health services with parent involvement and education. Close collaboration between families, schools and base agencies provides the foundation for success in the Sure Start program. Applications are open to command sponsored families in the ranks of E-1 to E-5. For more information or to obtain an application, call the school at DSN 632-5677 or visit the school office in Area 1.

DOD issues election-year guidance

With election activity steadily picking up, defense officials are in the process of issuing regular election-year guidance to remind military and Defense Department civilians that they're subject to rules regulating their involvement in political activities. DOD Directive 1344.10 applies to members of the armed forces, whether they serve on active duty, as members of the reserve components not on active duty, as National Guard members in a nonfederal status,

and military retirees. In addition, the Hatch Act applies to federal civilian employees, and employees also are subject to widely published DOD guidance that discusses participation in political campaigns and elections.

AFAF extends video contest deadline

Air Force Assistance Fund officials extended the AFAF's 2012 fundraising campaign online video contest to Jan. 31. The contest is open to any individual or team and not limited to one entry per base. The winning video for each category will be featured on the AFAF YouTube channel and played at the 9th annual Air Force Charity Ball March 24 in Springfield, Va. For more information, visit www.afassistancefund.org.

Be Featured in the Compass



Submit your travel photos for a chance to be featured in the Compass.

For more information or to send photos, e-mail 31fw.panews@aviano.af.mil or call DSN 632-7555.

L'AMBIENTE • ENVIRONMENT

il paesaggio • landscape

la montagna
mountain

la pendice
slope

la riva
bank

il fiume
river

le rapide
rapids

le rocce
rocks



il ghiacciaio
glacier



la valle | valley



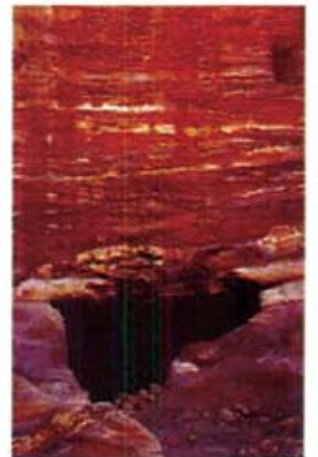
la collina
hill



l'altipiano
plateau



la gola
gorge



la caverna
cave

Grotta Gigante

Step back in time



**Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Justin Weaver**
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Located in Trieste just 80 miles east of Aviano, the Grotta Gigante is one of the largest “show caves” in the world.

Visitors can tour the cave year-round and enjoy the wide range of stalactites and stalagmites. The cave can be accessed by a downhill tunnel with a total of 500 steps descending into the almost 300-foot-high main chamber. A tour guide leads the 50-minute trip through the cave, with information given in English at three different stops throughout the tour.

In 1840 the Grotta Gigante was partially explored for the first time by Antonio Federico Lindner while he was searching for the underground river Timavo to be used for the Trieste water lines. However, the vastness and depth of the cave made it impossible to fully explore with primitive exploration techniques.

The cave consists of limestone, dozens of stalagmites and enormous stalagmatic groups. The different colors on the cave walls are due to the presence of mineral salts. White and grey are characteristic of pure calcite, whereas all shades of red, ochre and brown are characteristic of iron oxides and aluminum salts.

At the end of the cavern, 500 more steps lead visitors to a magnificent view of the chamber below. The cave maintains a year-round temperature of 51 F and it is recommended to only wear a light jacket

during the tour.

Ticket prices

Adults: €11

Children 6-16: €8

Children 3-6: €1

Times

From October to March, 10 a.m. to

4 p.m. at the start of each hour

From April to September, 10 a.m. to

6 p.m. every 30 minutes

Getting there:

The caves are about an hour and about half drive on the autostrada and tolls are €5.10 each way. Drivers should remember that it is mandatory to have winter tires on their vehicle or snow chains on board now through April 15 when driving in the Friuli regional area, specifically on the A4, A28, A23 and the Raccordo Villesse Gorizia, from Villesse to Gorizia and the Slovenian border. Seasonal tires and all-weather tires are acceptable if they are marked with “M+S” or “M-S” or “MS.” They are also required on the municipal road from Aviano to Piancavallo. Police have been seen routinely stopping vehicles exiting the autostrada to check for chains or winter tires. Violations are punished with a fine ranging from 80 to 318 euro.

The GPS coordinates for the cave are 45.709693, 13.764528. For more information on the Grotta Gigante, visit www.grottagigante.it.





The Grotta Gigante is located 80 miles east of Aviano in Trieste. The cave can be accessed by a downhill tunnel with a total of 500 steps descending into the almost 300-foot-high main chamber. A tour guide leads the 50-minute trip through the cave, with information given in English at three different stops throughout the tour.

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AVIANO AIR BASE
FORCE
SUPPORT SQUADRON

Free tax assistance begins Jan. 23

By Capt. Joseph Weismantel
31st Fighter Wing
Legal Office

The Aviano Tax Center will be open for free professional tax preparation and e-filing services beginning Jan. 23.

The Tax Center will file only 1040EZs during the first week, but appointments for other filers can be scheduled at anytime.

Beginning Jan. 30, filings will be by appointment only Monday through Wednesday and walk-ins for 1040EZ filers on Thursdays.

The Tax Center is located at the Aviano Legal Office, Building 1403 (second floor, above Finance and Home Fuels). Hours are 9 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 9 a.m. to noon Thursdays walk-in for 1040EZ filers.

Last year, volunteers assisting in the program saved Aviano members nearly \$200,000 in preparation fees and returned more than \$2.3 million in refunds to Aviano Airmen and families.

Come Prepared

Military cardholders, including Airmen, Department of Defense civilians and retirees, who wish to use the free tax preparation and

e-filing services should have all their documents, such as social security cards for all filers and dependents, prior year tax returns, W-2s, mortgage statements and receipts, ready when they meet with preparers. If taxpayers come prepared, it not only helps ensure an accurate tax return, but also enables the preparers to make sure the taxpayers are able to capitalize on all of the available deductions and credits.

Taxpayers with more complicated returns, such as those with capital gains, rental real estate income or loss, foreign earned income or foreign taxes paid or multiple state income tax returns, should take the time to ensure their documents are in order.

New Locations

Beginning Jan. 24, the Tax Center will have manned drop-off sites available at the following locations:

- La Dolce Vita Dining Facility, Area F (6:30-7:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays)
- Clinic Main Lobby at Area 1 (Noon to 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays)

This service is primarily intended for those filing a 1040EZ. However, other filers may also schedule appointments during those times at those locations.

Earned Income Credit

Taxpayers may continue to claim

three children for earned income credit purposes provided they meet the income and filing status tests:

- Three or more children lived with you and you earned less than \$43,998 or \$49,078 for married filing jointly
- Two or more children lived with you and you earned less than \$40,964 or \$46,044 for married filing jointly
- One child lived with you and you earned less than \$36,052 or \$41,132 if married filing jointly
- No children lived with you and you earned less than \$13,660 or \$18,740 if married filing jointly

The annual amount of investment income to be eligible for this credit is \$3,150. Taxpayers may continue to choose to include or exclude combat zone pay in earned income for the purpose of computing this credit.

Standard Deduction

Generally, the standard deductions depend upon the taxpayer's filing status:

- \$5,800 for Single and Married Filing Separate taxpayers
- \$11,600 for Married Filing Jointly or Qualifying Widow(er)
- \$8,500 for Head of Household

Deadline for filing income tax is April 17. For additional information, contact the Tax Center at DSN 632-8294. *(To read the rest of the article, visit www.aviano.af.mil.)*

New child care program option now available

By Senior Airman Katherine Windish
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The Area F Child Development Center recently introduced the 2012 Child Start Care Program, offering hourly care for families with children ages 1 to 5.

"There is a huge demand for this service at Aviano Air Base," said Alessia Da Re, Area F CDC assistant director. "People who need to go to doctor's appointments, run errands or attend Right Start, Spouse Start or Heart Link now have child care available to them."

Everyone is eligible for the program; however, families who are attending Right Start or are currently going through a permanent change of station have priority. Five dedicated care slots are available, and three reservations are allowed per two-week period. The program costs \$3 per hour for up to 10 hours a day.

"Every time I tried to get my son in for hourly care, [the

CDC] has always been full, and I was worried about what we were going to do when it was time to PCS this year, so I am very excited to hear about [the new program]," said Jaimie Redd.

Oktawia Scott, who recently took advantage of the program, agreed with Redd.

"It is a big relief to have this program available now, I'm really happy that they started it," said Scott. "Before it was nearly impossible to find an available slot, this week I called to make an appointment and got in right away. It was a huge help to be able to drop off my daughter for a few hours and take care of things."

Reservations can be made up to seven days in advance, except for members attending Right Start, who can reserve a spot up to 30 days in advance. Customers are required to submit their child's shot records and a list of allergies prior to care. To make a reservation or for more information, call DSN 632-5199.