

Okaloosa County News Release



December 22, 2015

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Interim Airports Director, Tracy Stage, A.A.E., 651-7160

Photo Caption-group with Santa: (L-R) Clerk JD Peacock, II; Tax Collector Ben Anderson, Airman First Class Christine Davis, Airman First Class Saxton, Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel, Captain Larry Ward, OCSO; Captain Jay Jones, OCSO; Sheriff Larry Ashley, Major Greg Gaddis, OCSO; Supervisor of Elections Paul Lux, Director Heidi Blair, USO; (Santa is Airport Maintenance Supervisor Terry Mace, and Elf is his granddaughter Alyssa,) USO Volunteer Jean Clemons, Supervisor USO Freedom Lounge Diane Freeman, USO Volunteer Bill Reed; and back row by Santa is Interim Airports Director Tracy Stage, Deputy Airports Director Mike Stenson and Commissioner Kelly Windes. Airmen Saxton and Davis were visitors to the USO.

Photo Caption check presentation: L-R: Captain Larry Ward, Major Greg Gaddis, Captain Jay Jones, Sheriff Larry Ashley, USO Director Heidi Blair and Supervisor USO Freedom Lounge Diane Freeman.

Okaloosa County Elected Officials Select the USO for Holiday Giving

Okaloosa County Elected Officials spent December collecting items for the USO Freedom Lounge at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS). "Let's make this an amazing Christmas for the 1600 soldiers that pass through our USO – the men and women who fight and have fought for our nation," said Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel, who spearheaded the effort on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's office collected \$750 and presented the check, in honor of the soldiers lost in Afghanistan this week – "a tragic reminder that while we celebrate the holidays, we still have soldiers fighting and dying," said Sheriff Ashley. County offices of the Clerk, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser and Supervisor of Elections collected money and items on the USO needs list. A much needed \$1,150 collected.

"You all have really outdone yourselves this year and we just appreciate it so much," said Heidi Blair, USO director for Northwest Florida. Interim Airports Director Tracy Stage agreed, saying "The collective efforts of our County leadership will go a long way here for our nation's heroes and their families traveling VPS."

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