

186th continues to train on board station

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Naval Air Station Meridian and the 186th Air Refueling Wing began a partnership in April 2009. That partnership, called "Project Liberty" continues to thrive.

The mission: Training pilots using new intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance.

Military members from the 186th use NAS Meridian's facilities for training exercises. The training consists of an MC-12 aircraft orbiting overhead the base "collecting" full motion video imagery and ground force units "patrolling" designated areas to simulate ground threats. The MC-12 is a variant of the C-12 King Air outfitted with sensors capable of detecting movement at great distances. Because the aircraft is operating at such a high altitude, most personnel on base will never realize the aircraft is there. The ground forces are divided into "good guys -- coalition forces"

and "bad guys -- opposing forces." The pilots of the MC-12 will communicate the location of the opposing forces to the coalition Soldiers.

All training aids, including training weapons, will be clearly marked with blue tape or paint. No live fire exercises will be conducted. Base personnel may notice the opposing forces dressed in costume as well as coalition forces dressed in full battle gear. All vehicles will be clearly marked "Project Liberty."

It is extremely important for the 186th to simulate their mission to the fullest extent possible in preparation for deployment to overseas locations. Specific training areas located on the base are: Lake Martha, the small arms range, MWR trailer storage area, Bernath Field, the ballfield behind Navy Gateway Inn & Suites, RCTA MOUT City and the skeet range. NAS Security will be aware of specific training areas being used daily and the training will not interfere with any base functions.