



Federal & Military

Yes, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Tournament Brings International Spotlight to Harrison County

Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss. recently hosted the 2009 Conseil International du Sport Militaire (CISM) Women's Soccer Championship from June 6 through June 13. The event brought teams from seven nations to the Mississippi Gulf Coast to compete in the 10-day soccer championship.

Commonly known by its acronym "CISM," the international sports association is composed of the armed forces of 138 member nations. CISM's ultimate goal is to contribute to world peace by uniting armed forces through sports, and the organization operates under the motto "Friendship through Sport." The United States hosts one championship each year, and Keesler was chosen to host this year's games in Biloxi.

The teams from Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Republic of South Korea and the United States, with more than 200 participants, competed at the Biloxi High School Stadium and Gulfport Sports Complex. Brazil defeated The Republic of South Korea in the finals to capture the gold medal of the 5th CISM World Military Women's Soccer Championship. The Netherlands won the bronze medal after their defeat of France with the score of 2-1, which began with a penalty goal kick after only 20 minutes. The following top three finishers included France, Germany and Canada, with the United States in seventh place.

The competitions were open to the public, and attendance was encouraged with a car and scholarship giveaway. Project coordinators said that the teams from other countries were impressed with how knowledgeable the community was about the event and very appreciative of the Southern hospitality.

In addition to the games, other activities were held throughout the 10 days to give participants a taste of the local culture. Hard Rock Hotel & Casino hosted an event, and participants enjoyed a trip on the Biloxi Schooner. During cultural day, participants were treated to a crawfish and shrimp boil. The event was open to the entire base and allowed the players to socialize and make bonds with the other teams.

While the games helped strengthen bonds with other nations and shined an international spotlight on Keesler Air Force Base, they also enhanced Keesler's ties with the local community. Brian Mooers, Keesler's CISM project coordinator, said, "The bigger picture, above the soccer games, is that we watched the community and the base pull off this event together, which demonstrated the strength of our relationship with the community."

For more information on Keesler Air Force Base and CISM, please visit www.keesler.af.mil.



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