



# CONR - 1 AF/AFNORTH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 'America's AOC' tracks Santa this Christmas Eve

**TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.** – Members of the 601st Air and Space Operations Center will once again track Santa Claus on part of his journey around the world this Christmas Eve, and media interested in tracking Santa are invited to visit 'America's AOC' Thursday [see *editor's note below*].



In conjunction with the "NORAD Tracks Santa" program, the AOC will monitor jolly ol' St. Nick to provide as he makes his stops around the world.

"Tracking Santa has been a proud NORAD tradition for more than 50 years," said Col. Scott Barberides, 101st Air Operations Group commander. "It's our job here at the AOC to monitor Santa as he makes his way through the U.S. delivering his very important cargo."

The tradition of tracking Santa started in 1955, when a call was made on Christmas Eve to the Continental Air Defense Command Operations Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., from a little girl asking to speak to Santa Claus.

A local newspaper had printed an advertisement inviting children to call Santa Claus but had accidentally printed the wrong number. Instead of getting Santa, the little girl spoke to Col. Harry Shoup, the senior officer on duty. Colonel Shoup received numerous calls that night, but rather than hanging up, he instructed all of his operators to find the location of Santa Claus and report it to every child who phoned in that night.

When CONAD became NORAD in 1958, the tradition of tracking Santa transferred to the new command. NORAD is the bi-national military organization responsible for the aerospace and maritime defense of the United States and Canada.

For more information on Santa and to track his journey with NORAD online, visit the "NORAD Tracks Santa" web site at [www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org).

For more information on America's AOC and their mission visit [www.facebook.com/AmericasAOC](https://www.facebook.com/AmericasAOC) and log on to become a fan today.

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**Editor's Note:** Media interested in tracking Santa are invited to visit America's AOC on Christmas Eve -- Dec. 24 -- at 11 a.m. Any media wishing to attend must call 1st Lt. Andrew Scott at (850) 282-0725, or email [andrew.scott@tyndall.af.mil](mailto:andrew.scott@tyndall.af.mil) by 3 p.m. Wednesday to verify attendance and arrange escort. Cameras and recording devices will be permitted in the facility.