

HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

Vol. 34 No. 9

Serving the U.S. Army community in Hawaii

March 18, 2005

What's Inside



Welcome home

Nearly 1,000 Soldiers redeploy from OEF.

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Army Emergency Relief Fund Raiser

This year's campaign officially started March 11. Contributions are important to individuals with emergency needs. Monetary donations are accepted at any time. For more information contact your unit AER Fund Campaign Project Officer or call 655-2383.



Wolfhounds TOA

"Red Devils" take over Wolfhound mission in Afghanistan.

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American Red Cross

The American Red Cross Schofield Barracks Service Center is holding a class for Standard First Aid and Adult CPR Plus Child and Infant CPR. The classes are March 21, 23 and 24 from 6-9:30 p.m. The cost is \$39 and includes the book. To register for a class call 655-4927.



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Division uncases colors

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
Staff Writer

Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division (Light) made history Tuesday when the Division Colors were uncased for the first time since the Vietnam War.

Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, 25th Inf. Div. (L) commander, Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe, 25th Inf. Div. (L) command sergeant major, and more than 30 headquarters staff returned home from their one-year deployment in Afghanistan and were welcomed in a ceremony on Wheeler Army Air Field.

Olson spoke to Soldiers and family members at the event, and thanked Gen. (Retired) Frederick Weyand for attending the ceremony. Weyand was the commanding general during the Vietnam War.

"It was a beautiful ceremony, and it brought back a lot of memories," Weyand said. "About 30 years ago, I took the Tropic Lightning Division to Vietnam ... seeing them come back now, [I realize] how much it's changed through those 30 years," he said smiling. He cited one major difference

See "Uncased" Page A-10



Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, 25th Inf. Div. (L) commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe, uncased the Division Colors after returning home from a one year deployment to Afghanistan.

An OEF farewell



Sgt. Adrian Schulte

Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, commander of Combined Forces Command, Afghanistan, passes a guidon to Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya, incoming commander of Combined Joint Task Force 76, during a transfer of authority ceremony held at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Tuesday. Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson (right of Barno) observes.

New programs, incentives focused on boosting recruiting efforts

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Army is using a variety of programs and incentives to help attract more young men and women into its ranks, according to Curtis Gilroy, DoD's director of accession policy.

Working to recruit 80,000 new members by late September, the Army is putting more recruiters in the field and giving them better tools to do their job, Gilroy said. Service officials are also hoping to boost the number and size of enlistment bonuses and are planning to roll out new advertising efforts that focus on adults who influence young people's decisions regarding military service.

Recruiters are "very, very important" to the overall recruiting effort, Gilroy said. "A uniformed recruiter in the field not only signs up recruits, but provides a statement of the military to the community," he said.

"The recruiter is the single most powerful tool the military has in its recruiting effort," agreed Navy Capt. Chris Arendt, deputy director of the DoD accession policy office. "What

“What they bring is that personal touch, the personality to convey the honor and service of the military.”

- Capt. Chris Arendt

they bring is that personal touch, the personality to convey the honor and service of the military." Their effect, he said, "is powerfully strong."

While personal and in-home visits remain critical to the process, particularly among Hispanic prospects, military recruiting is going increasingly high-tech. Laptop computers and cell phones have become critical to recruiters, who frequently work out of their cars rather than offices. And there's been surprising success in "cyber-recruiting" — each service's use of online chat rooms for would-be recruits to get information about the mili-

tary. "Each of the services has recognized that today's generation is a computer-savvy generation and does many things with the Internet," Arendt said. "Each service has reacted to that and is setting up cyber-recruiting efforts."

The Army, the leader among the services in this initiative, has a live chat room where recruiters can answer people's questions and guide them toward the information they need in their decision-making. Potential recruits can enter the chat room in a safe environment, using a pseudonym if they wish, to ask questions or even check information about the military they've received from recruiters or others, Arendt explained.

The Army is also taking steps to beef up the bonuses it offers new recruits.

Bonuses are very important for a variety of reasons, Gilroy said. They entice people to join the military in the first place. "They are also useful in channeling these new recruits into particular occupations that we really need," he said.

Generally jobs that offer the highest bonuses are

See "Recruiting" Page A-11

765 Soldiers selected for auto-promotion to SGT

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
Staff Writer

There is a shortage of E-5 sergeants in "star" military occupational specialties, and the Army has adjusted its policy to fill the gaps.

Under a new promotion policy, approved Feb. 23, all specialists and corporals with two years in service and one year in grade will be placed on a promotion list for sergeant. Only if their MOS's fall below 100

percent strength at the E-5 level will some of these Soldiers be promoted under the policy.

The policy potentially affects around 19,000 corporals and specialists on Active Duty, and is directly affecting 765 Soldiers from Hawaii.

But "automatic" in this case really means, "automatic if the commander says so."

See "Promotion" Page A-10

How did the E-5 shortage occur?

The creation of new brigade combat teams and units of action require senior NCOs, which have made promotions to E-6 and E-7 occur more quickly. As a result, there are even more E-5 vacancies. Additionally, the number of Soldiers recommended for promotion to sergeant has decreased to slightly more than 10 percent of eligible Soldiers, according to G1

stats.

Ten years ago, 30 percent of eligible Soldiers were promoted to sergeant.

Without sergeants, it is difficult for the rest of the NCO corps to grow. The new promotion policy should eliminate the shortages and motivate Soldiers.

See "Promotion (B)" Page A-10

The Hawaii Army Weekly welcomes letters and commentaries from readers. To submit call the editor at 655-4816 or e-mail editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.

The deadline for articles is the Friday prior to the week of publication. Send all articles in Microsoft Word or text format.

OPINION & COMMENTARY

Everyone's Irish on St. Patrick's Day

Commentary

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
Staff Writer

Top of the mornin' to ya! Saint Patrick's Day was Thursday, and many celebrated in different ways. Some people Irish, some not. But why celebrate? There's leprechauns, green beers, black-and-tans, Irish creams, corned beef and cabbage, Celtic music, bagpipes and drums, dancing, kisses, laughing, hugs, fun, festivities and fellowship just to name a few. And let's not forget about the man who started it all.

As the patron saint of Ireland, St. Patrick is one of Christianity's most well-known and loved figures. Through his life, St. Patrick spread the joy of Christianity throughout Ireland, and is believed to have passed away on March 17 around the year 460. Now countries around the world put on their "Irish" green to celebrate every March.

St. Patrick's Day has never been a day for me, personally, to celebrate St. Patrick, per say. It's always been about getting together with friends and family, and celebrating the fact that we're all Irish. My family, like most Irish families, is very proud of their Irish roots. It is a pride I was raised with, and look forward to celebrating every year on

St. Patrick's Day.

Like many traditional Christian holidays, St. Patrick's Day is another celebration that is now very secular. In other words, it has lost a lot of its original Christian meaning; however, I don't think it's all gone.

When St. Patrick had celebrations, it was Christian fellowship and feasting. St. Patrick used the three-leaf clover to show the Holy Trinity - three in one. That's what started the tradition of wearing the clover, which eventually led to the wearing of green.

We still feast, drink and gather in unity, but my, how times have changed. Now we wear green clovers not only to show our Irish pride, but so no one will pinch us. Two years ago I was at a St. Patrick's Day celebration in Honolulu, and I didn't have on green. (Shame on me!) So, a pretty girl in an Irish-green skirt pinched me, and then stuck a clover sticker on my shirt, and then kissed me on the cheek. Which reminds me ... Kiss me, I'm Irish!

But, is the person wearing that clever Kiss-Me-I'm-Irish pin really Irish? It doesn't matter. St. Patrick's Day is such a wonderful holiday, whether you're Irish or not. It's not about being Irish, but celebrating the Irish, and what St. Patrick started - the spreading of the joy of Jesus' love, and

Christianity throughout Ireland and the world. Although some would argue with me that Jesus is not celebrated on St. Patrick's Day by many, I believe the heart of His core value - love - is most prevalent during this holiday.

Personally, I feel more love on this day than many other holidays; including Valentine's Day and Christmas.

I've heard it said, everyone's Irish on St. Patrick's Day. I think there is a lesson to be learned by this kind of unity during a celebration. The fellowship of a group in unified celebration on this holiday is truly unique and wonderful. It reminds me why I love being Irish so much. Maybe many people don't celebrate St. Patrick's Day the way it was intended, but in a way, I believe it is the same.

Families coming together, friends and even strangers gather and share love for one another, and celebrate St. Patrick, who spread the greatest message of God's love. I believe that love can be seen today during most St. Patrick's Day celebrations. And from this Irish-American, Daniel Patrick Kelly, I leave you with this old Irish blessing ...

"May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, and rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand."

Erin go braugh, and God bless America.



"What are your dreams?"

Commentary

By Sarah Burdan
Contributing Writer

I paused for a moment. Usually, I would have responded to my husband's questions with something sassy. I enjoy shocking him and making him smile.

However, today I went deeper. What do I dream about? My greatest dreams and desires are for our future together. I dream about things great ... having children, our careers, doing what God has planned for us.

But now I also dream about little things that are close to my heart. I dream about saying his name in the darkness and hearing a sleepy "hmmmm?" in response. I dream about him rolling over and feeling his arm around my waist. I dream of his voice, his laughter, his smile. All the special little things that you watch couples do so naturally; holding hands, the unspoken glances, the looks that go straight to your heart.

When the tough, professional man melts and he looks at you so gently you want to hold him forever. The times he comes home exhausted and worn but still ready to help you and listen to your day. The times you want to scoop him into your arms and comfort him because he is struggling. Or those brief glances and silly expressions he has when he is trying to get you to smile and not be mad at him for doing something stupid.

My husband has this great fake sad face. It is amazing ... this huge guy and he gets his eyebrows and chin to tremble like a little boy ready to cry. I am sure it worked wonders on his mom. He looks so silly I find my anger melting away

and laughing with him.

I dream of having Christmas together. I dream of shopping together and watching him put the topper on top of our tree. I dream of having someone who appreciates my cooking. I dream of preparing a special dinner and hearing his car drive up from work.

I dream of being able to talk about our day ... venting, sharing, discussing our future, getting his advice.

I dream of the excitement of dressing up to go out to a fancy dinner on our anniversary. Or walking through the state fair together, amazed at how much he can eat.

I think of telling him I am pregnant with our first child. I dream of his response and his face.

I dream of dinner parties and game nights with friends that are currently awkward now without him.

I dream of worshipping together. I dream of our walks and his voice praying over me at night.

I have decided that as tough as we may be, as grown up, mature and educated, not much has changed since I was a little girl.

Like a little girl, I dream and I wait hoping that someday my dreams will come true. It reminds me of the song: "... some day my prince will come ..."

Hope is what keeps me going. The knowledge that some day I will be waiting for him to get off a plane. Some night a book will not be my only company.

Some day I will cry in the night and be held. Some night I will speak his name and be told to go to sleep.

Some day I will not be the only one juggling the bills, the car, the kids, and the house.

Some day the shoulders that I have relied on so much will be back and I will be able to lean on him.

Some day I will be able to share all these thoughts,

ideas and questions. Some day I will watch the sunset and hear him breathing beside me ... at peace with out his eyes watching the horizon for attack.

Some day this longing will go away. Someday I will not have to wonder if the news and the violence have to do with my husband.

Someday my car will look normal again ... without yellow ribbons, American flags, magnets and writing.

Do you find yourselves noticing other couples more? Do you do a double take when you see a guy in uniform? Do you watch the Soldiers on base and see how the fathers interact with their children? Do you watch them laugh with their wives, talk to them, and put their arms around their shoulders? Do you notice the little glances between them? The ones that are so intimate they do not need words.

I enjoy watching people and I wonder if they appreciate how blessed they are.

Our "some day" will come! And it is my hope that never again will I take a day with him for granted. Never again will I let him leave without hearing "I love you" even if we are fighting.

Every moment is precious ... it can be taken away so quickly. I mourn the time we wasted fighting, over reasons I can not even remember. Never again will my stubbornness and pride be worth compromising our time. Never again will I dismiss the news ... I will remember this time. I will remember the pain and I will pray that whoever is on the next rotation will have strength to hope that they will have their "some day"

So until your "some day" comes, keep dreaming about it and when it comes remember what it was like and how valuable your Soldier is to you.

Voices of Lightning

Why is it important to celebrate Women's History Month?



"Women's history month is important because it allows us to remember and remind women of the opportunities and responsibilities that we have."

Lauren Betz
Navy Fitness Specialist



"It's important to remember how far women have come and, the progress we have made, physically and mentally. Women are capable of doing absolutely anything because of the pioneer women that came before us."

Heather Crawford
Family Member



"It's important to celebrate because we are all role models for the next generation of young women. It's important to give them a strong foundation, good moral values, and a belief that they can succeed academically."

Debbie Hetherington
Family Member



"It's just to celebrate and recognize women's accomplishments and try and make other women do better things and know they can do anything."

Aixia Maldonado
Family Member



"It's important to recognize the accomplishments of women in the military family."

Vera Ross
DA Civilian



"By celebrating women's history month, we not only see their past accomplishments ... we encourage women to push to accomplish even more and see they can do just about anything."

Linda Williams
DA Civilian

The Hawaii Army Weekly is an authorized newspaper and is published in the interest of the U.S. Army community in Hawaii.

All editorial content of the Hawaii Army Weekly is the responsibility of the U.S. Army, Hawaii Public Affairs Office, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii 96857. Contents of the Hawaii Army Weekly are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of the Army.

The Hawaii Army Weekly is printed by The Honolulu Advertiser, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Government,

HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

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The Hawaii Army Weekly is published weekly using the offset method of reproduction and has a printed circulation of 15,300.

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Nearly 1,000 OEF Soldiers return home

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

Nearly 1,000 Operation Enduring Freedom Soldiers on 11 different flights redeployed to Hawaii between March 10 and Wednesday. The large numbers of returning troops brought the percentage of redeployed Soldiers to more than 50 percent.

Among the returnees was Maj. Gen Eric T. Olson, commanding general, 25th Infantry Division (Light) and 34 members of his staff arrived Tuesday after a transfer of authority ceremony in Afghanistan.

Returning Soldiers represented a cross-section of eight division units.

Brig. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, 25th Inf. Div. (L), and U.S. Army, Hawaii assistant division commander for support, greeted many of the returning Soldiers at the welcome home ceremonies on Wheeler Army Air Field.

Commenting on the division's support of the Afghan elections, Jacoby said, "It was the focus for a good part of the deployment and its overwhelming success represented a whole series of successes."

"I think it will go down in the history books as a significant political and military event ... the division's got its name all over it and should be proud."

Jacoby also commented on the uniqueness of each welcome.

"Every chalk (flight) has a different group of families waiting for a different group of Soldiers. The welcome home ceremony is just as fresh, as special, and as important for Chalk 31 as it was for Chalk 1," he said.

Among the returnees was Pfc. Jennifer Holliday, 19. With tears in her eyes and a "Cheshire cat" grin, she said, "This past year was truly incredible, very memorable, and eventful."

"It was my first deployment and we did a whole lot of work there (Afghanistan). I gained a lot of maturity and much more appreciation for the little things that I used to take for granted. But, I am so glad to be home," Holliday said.

Another Soldier, Maj. Chip Bircher, looked forward to joining his family at the welcome home ceremony.

"It feels absolutely fantastic to be home. The first thing I am going to do is play with my kids and try not to annoy my wife," he said, jokingly.

Asked if he learned anything over the past year, he replied, "I learned my family is more important to me than I previously thought. I mean, I used to say they were, but now I realize I've taken them for granted ... I am not going to let that happen any more."

Bircher's wife, Meaghan, waited in the ceremony hangar for her husband's arrival.

"This is just overwhelming ... I can't put it into words," she said, excitedly. "No doubt about it ... there were good times and bad, but we made it," she said.



Nearly 1,000 Soldiers marched through this hangar on Wheeler Army Air Field between March 10 and Wednesday. Pictured are Soldiers from eight units including: 325th FSB; HHC, 25th ID (L); 125th MI; 125th Sig. Bn.; 25th MP BDE; 2-27th Inf. Rgt.; 65th Eng.; and 2-25th Avn.

Capt. Angel Alvarado, rear detachment commander of HHC, 25th Inf. Div. (L) and his 2-year-old daughter, Kialis, awaited the arrival of his wife, Capt. Norca Rojas, 25th Military Police Brigade.

"Its been the challenge of my life," said Alvarado of the deployment. He added that his unique situation, that of a spouse of a deployed Soldier, a single parent, and rear detachment commander, helped him to connect with the families in his unit.

"Now I can understand what deployed Soldiers and families go through because I've been in both their shoes," he said.

The waiting for Soldiers and families ended when the now familiar strains of the "Rocky" theme sounded and the hangar doors opened. The crowd erupted with cheers of joy and tears of relief in a scene that will repeat itself until the last of the division's deployed Soldiers return.

Units that redeployed include the division's headquarters company, 125th Military Intelligence Battalion, 125th Signal Bn., 25th MP Brigade, 2nd Bn., 27th Infantry Regiment, 65th Engineers, 325th Forward Support Bn., and 2nd Bn., 25th Aviation Rgt.

Redeployments will continue through June with the return of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team and the Division Artillery.



Maj. Shannon Lucas, 25th MP Brigade, shares a moment with his children, Tristan, 5, and Kayleigh, 7.

Briefs

Mothers of Twins Club

AMOM is a social and emotional support group for families with twins, triplets or more. With membership to AMOM comes membership in the National Organization of Mothers Of Twins Club (www.nomotc.org) which includes access to the members-only part of their Web site and their bi-monthly national newsletter. Local club benefits include networking with other parents of multiples, monthly meetings, bi-annual clothing and equipment swap and other activities. Meetings are held at the Salt Lake District Park Gym at 7 p.m. and are normally the third Thursday of each month. AMOMS is a place for families with multiples because it is one of the few places where having twins or triplets (or more) are a common occurrence! Call 247-8946 for more information.

Free IT Training

Did you know that as an Army Soldier or civilian you have access to more than 1,500 free Web based IT, Business and Self Development courses that provide IT certification training as well as Continuous Learning Points? If your office or home environment is not conducive to training, visit a Digital Training Facility to take the training in a classroom style setting.

For more information, go to www.us.army.mil and select "My Education" under Self Service and click "Army e-Learning." To locate a DTF, visit www.dls.army.mil and click on "Digital Training Facilities."

Easter Sunrise Worship Services

Services will be held March 27 at Stoneman Stadium on Schofield Barracks. (In case of inclement weather, Schofield Main Post Chapel). Chaplain (Col.) Kerry Steedley will preside over the Protestant service at 6:30 a.m. Chaplain (Maj.) Jack Herron will preside over the Roman Catholic service at 8 a.m. Casual worship attire. Light refresh-

Safe in daddy's arms



Sgt 1st Class Dale Leary, 125th Signal Battalion, holds his 4-month-old son, Ryan Patrick at a welcome home ceremony, March 11. This is the first time he has held Ryan since his birth. Wife, Michelle, looks on.

Joy Boisselle

ments after the service.

Annual Easter Festival

Festival to be held at the Wahiawa Shopping Center and Wahiawa Town Center on California Avenue in the Long's parking lot on March 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free keiki games, prizes, balloons (while supplies last), Easter bunny photos at Long's Drug Store in Wahiawa from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Other free activities: Magic show by "Pockets the Clown" from 10:15 - 10:45 a.m.; choo-choo train rides 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; keiki Easter egg hunt at 12 p.m. for youth ages 2 - 11; pony rides from 12 - 2 p.m.

FBI Recruitment

There will be an FBI seminar March 31 at the Prince Kuhio Federal Building, Room 5-208; 300 Ala Moana Blvd.; Honolulu, scheduled from 10 a.m. to noon. For

reservations and additional information on future seminars, contact FBI Special Agent Kal Wong at 566-4488.

Schofield Barracks Commissary Hours

Commissary will close April 11 at 3 p.m. Store hours that day will be 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., but will open from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. on April 12.

Free Easter Breakfast

Come to the WAVE, Easter Sunday, March 27,

9:15 a.m. for a free breakfast; service to follow at 10 a.m. The Wave is a new worship service on Fort Shafter that meets in the dining facility in building 503 B. For more information call 438-1816.

Found Property

The following items have been found:

1. Four tires, Yokohama brand
2. Motorola hand held radio with an orange sticker on it.

Anyone who owns this property can contact the Evidence Custodian at 655-5170 or 655-2157 with a description of the property and specific information.

DFAS Changes Web Site Address

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service public Web site has changed from (www.dfas.mil) to (www.dod.mil/dfas) as of March

Webmasters who link to the site or pages within the

site should review their links and update them accordingly. The current site at <http://www.dfas.mil> will remain available until March 31. After that date, users will be redirected to the root level of the new site and direct links to pages at the previous site will generate an error message notifying users of the move.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross Schofield Barracks Service Center is holding a class for Standard First Aid and Adult CPR Plus Child and Infant CPR. The classes are March 21, 23 and 24 from 6-9:30 p.m. The cost is \$39 and includes the book. To register for a class call 655-4927.

YMCA Babysitting Class

The Armed Services YMCA is offering a babysitter training class on March 22-23. This two-day program targets teenagers who babysit outside the home or look after siblings. It includes CPR and First Aid certification, age appropriate activities, and much more. The cost is \$40 and pre-registration is required. Please call 624-5645 for more information.

Free Square Dancing

The military is invited to free Community Square Dances on Saturdays beginning March 19 through April 2 at the Manana Community Park, Waimano Home Road, Pearl City from 7 - 9 p.m. New dancers will be introduced to the basic moves of this national folk dance. No experience is required. Singles, couples, families with teens are welcome. "Even real men can square dance." Admission is free. Casual attire suggested. Registration will be available for a new 10 week class beginning April 9. Contact Dave Lemon at 456-8465.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Command Sgt. Maj. David Yates (left) and Lt. Col. Walter Piatt case the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment colors during a transfer of authority ceremony March 12 at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, Afghanistan.

Wolfhounds transfer authority in Paktika Province to Red Devils

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
CTF Thunder Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan – After a year in Afghanistan, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment officially transferred authority of one of the country's roughest provinces to 1st Bn. (Airborne), 508th Inf. Rgt. March 12.

As a warm spring sun shone down, the two units conducted a transfer of authority ceremony, with 2-27 casing its colors, and 1-508 subsequently uncasing its.

Speaking at the ceremony, Col. Gary H. Cheek, commander of Combined Task Force Thunder, said the Wolfhounds of 2-27 did a magnificent job during their year in Afghanistan.

Cheek said he didn't want to recite data about weapons caches collected, enemy killed, attacks repelled or enemy leaders captured, because to do so would characterize the fight here as a one-dimensional effort.

"To have that kind of thinking is a dangerous way to approach the mission here," he said.

"That one dimension will never be enough to beat this enemy here and give this country a chance to move forward."

Cheek said a lot of what the Wolfhounds did, and the Red Devils will do, sounds contrary to what one might expect from

an infantry battalion.

"But, we expect a lot from our infantry battalions, and all of our units here, to do things out of the ordinary to make a big difference in the country," he said.

"Because in the end, it's not about statistics, it's about the effects you generate."

In welcoming the Red Devils to the team, Cheek asked them to remember that the key to this fight is not the enemy.

"The key to this fight really lies within the Afghan population," he said.

"When you go out and do an operation, your conduct and your actions are going to influence the population, and they're either going to like you, or they're going to not like you, or maybe even hate you. If you win their support, you win this war."

Lt. Col. Walter Piatt, commander of 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., wondered what history will one day say about the Wolfhounds' year here.

After all, he said, no enemy formations have surrendered, no peace treaties have been signed and there have been no celebrations for the end of hostilities.

"Perhaps the lack of chaos is our only true measure of success," he said.

"But, maybe we have lit a spark and given hope to those who previously had none.

Piatt told the Red Devils that the people are the true victims in this war and therefore

must remain their objective. Their ability to extend compassion will have great effects, he said.

"This war must be fought with your minds, not your triggers," Piatt said.

Lt. Col. Timothy McGuire, commander of 1st Bn., 508th Inf. Rgt., said the battalion has prepared for this mission for the last year, and will build on the Wolfhounds' legacy.

"We are truly humbled and honored to be replacing the Wolfhounds here in Paktika Province," McGuire said.

"Paktika Province is the most strategic province in Afghanistan. If the central government succeeds in Paktika, it will succeed throughout the country."

McGuire said the Wolfhounds have set the standard for fighting counter-insurgency by winning the populace, and pledged that as the Wolfhounds have set the standard for OEF-V, the Red Devils will set the standard for OEF-VI.

Located along the border with Pakistan, Paktika Province is about the size of Vermont and much of the province is rough, mountainous terrain. FOB Orgun-E, located near the town of Orgune, is about 7,500 feet above sea level.

After the ceremony, the few remaining Soldiers from 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt. boarded helicopters to begin their journey back to Hawaii.

Wolfhounds complete last OEF mission

Scouts conduct final operation in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Det.

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – It didn't begin with fanfare or a ceremony.

Instead, it began as any other mission would for Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, "Wolfhounds."

The team and squad leaders conducted a pre-combat inspection while the drivers finished the meticulous preventive maintenance checks and services on their vehicles.

After nearly a year of practice, the science of preparation was just a series of fluid procedures, no different from the ones before. But this mission was different. After it was complete, the scouts would greet their replacements, pack up the remainder of their gear and redeploy. This was their last mission.

"It was something we really didn't want to talk about, because we had a job to do," said Scout Platoon Team Leader Sgt. John Diaz.

This particular mission in Eastern Afghanistan would take the scouts from Forward Operating Base Orgun-E to FOB Sharana. Like any other mission, this one was divided into different sub-missions along the way.

While moving to FOB Sharana, the scouts conducted convoy security much like they did throughout the year.

The scouts moved through the Afghan communities to conduct mounted and dismounted presence patrols – a mission they have become accustomed to during the many village assessments they participated in as their battalion delivered humanitarian assistance in Paktika Province.

They also used their over watch technique to secure routes for other Wolfhound units along the way.

The scouts also participated in a non-traditional mission when they helped get Afghan trucks out of the mud.

Many of the skills the scouts honed during their time in Operation Enduring Freedom were used on their last patrol. And while many of the scouts avoided the thought that this would be their last mission, others said they thought a little about it along the way.

Diaz said he used some of the time to reflect on the past year.

"We did so much; it was kind of hard to think it was all coming to an end," he said. Others didn't spend a lot of



Sgt. John Diaz, Scout Platoon, HHC, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., pulls perimeter security on his last patrol as part of OEF.

time looking back, but instead concentrated on the future.

"I'm just looking forward to going home," said Sgt. Aaron Fillmore. "That was what has kept me going all year."

One Soldier even used the mission as an opportunity to reenlist.

During a security halt, while some of the platoon conducted perimeter security, Spc. Cleavon Whittington climbed up to an observation point he'd used numerous times before and recited the oath of enlistment.

"I couldn't think of a more suitable place," said Whittington. "I had spent a lot of time on that route. It would be only fitting that I reenlist there."

"I really liked helping the people," he said. "We were so busy here. There was always something to do. I really liked that."

During the reenlistment ceremony, Whittington admitted he couldn't help but think about his platoon.

"While I was taking the oath, I couldn't help but think about all the guys," he said. "I knew this would be one of the last times we would be on a mission together."

Whittington was right, as he is set to move on from Hawaii as soon as his unit returns. Others will also move to different units, some will leave the Army and still others will remain with the Wolfhounds.



Spc. Chad Davis, Scout Platoon, HHC, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., pulls perimeter security for his last patrol in support of Operation Enduring Freedom while the rest of his team conducts a village assessment.

The mission ended much as it began. The Scouts followed their post-mission procedures for clearing and cleaning weapons and ensured their vehicles were prepared for any contingency.

This time when they returned, they also moved out of their barracks and prepared for training their replacements.

Just like any other mission throughout their year here, the scouts remained busy with the task at hand, conducting themselves no differently than their first day.

"We didn't treat it like our last patrol, because we really didn't know it would be our last," said Diaz.

"Our mission here won't be finished until we are back in Hawaii."



Spc. Chad Davis, Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment conducts a dismounted patrol just outside Sharana city on the last mission he will conduct during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Kandahar Air Field's QRF Soldiers await call to duty

Story and photos by
Spc. Claudia K. Bullard
105th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Kandahar Air Field, AFGHANISTAN – At the main operating base for coalition forces in Southeastern Afghanistan, a group of Soldiers await the call to duty.

They are the Quick Reaction Force, or QRF – a cohesive team of Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment – ready to go into action at a moment's notice for emergency situations in support of Combined Task Force Bronco units.

Capt. Craig Vieth, who has worked extensively with the QRF, said the unit acts as "security blanket" for Soldiers on missions outside the wire. Though things are relatively quiet in post-election Afghanistan there is still potential for difficult situations to come up.

"The QRF responds on rescue missions and to units in fire fights against an overwhelming force," said Vieth. "They also respond to improvised explosive device attacks."

But it hasn't all been high-adrenaline. The QRF recently accompanied a medical team into a remote area of the Day Kundi Province in Central Afghanistan in response to a whooping cough outbreak. Since the epidemic occurred in an area where U.S. Forces do not readily operate, the QRF was chosen for their ability to provide a strong security presence and work effectively with the Afghan population.

The team saw it as a chance to do something to help the Afghan people. "To go out and help was great – anything to help kids," said Vieth.

When heavy snows delayed the retrieval of the team for three days, the QRF remained on standby – a monotonous and unpopular part of the job.

"It's the waiting," said Vieth, "which presents one of the biggest challenges to the team," adding that QRF personnel must be dedicated "to being ready" and "being technically and tactically proficient." According to Vieth, QRF Soldiers must go from the ready area to situations where they are required to immediately

react and perform.

Vieth said he usually goes along as "command and control but I've worked with these guys so much they seem like my own."

Spc. Bobby Radle is one of the Soldiers Vieth works with. He and fellow team members see nothing heroic about their service in the combat zone. Radle, of Freer, Texas, is hesitant to talk about his experiences but at 23, has a full understanding of what it takes for the team to survive in a combat situation.

"I try to watch the guy's back that's next to me," said Radle. "We all trust each other and have spent a lot of time together. You try your hardest to see that the guy next to you doesn't get hurt."

Radle's team took heavy fire for five days during Afghanistan's presidential elections. Radle spoke simply about the experience. "I didn't think too much about it. You just stay out there and do what you have to do."

Answering the call to duty might not always seem like an easy choice for these Soldiers. Many are in their early twenties and could be back home attending college and working part time jobs. However, they say the reason they signed up goes beyond combat pay, college money and bonuses.

"Doing my part" was the reason Spc. Travis Drudge, of Lagro, Ind., signed up for his first enlistment. After watching the World Trade Center bombing he said he was compelled to join the fight. "I felt like I had to do something for my country," said Drudge, 23, adding that he had two grandfathers who served in the military. "Hearing all the stuff on the news got to me after a while. These guys now ... they're my family."

Staff Sgt. Jason Diaz, Noncommissioned Officer in Charge on several QRF missions, said he sometimes wonders what he'd be doing if he was not in the military. Diaz, of Chicago, Ill., was injured earlier in this deployment when his team was hit by a rocket propelled grenade. He said on the ride back to KAF, he wondered if



Soldiers from Kandahar Air Field's Quick Reaction Force brace themselves against snow whipped up by an incoming Chinook. The team accompanied Afghan medical personnel and vaccinations to the site of a whooping cough outbreak in a remote part of Central Afghanistan. Humanitarian missions are becoming more common for combat units as the country finds peace in the strength of a newly elected government. The QRF is from 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, part of the 25th Infantry Division (Light).

he was going to live. However, he maintains the deployment experience is valuable. "It teaches you how to deal with different problems," said Diaz. "The leadership skills that you get in the military, you can use anywhere."

Spc. Douglas Fischgrund, 20, of Colonia, N.J., agrees saying, "This time is always going to be a big part of my life. Right now I can't picture my life anywhere else."

Once a mission is over and the QRF returns to KAF, the Soldiers do not relax until their weapons and gear are cleaned, repaired and ready to go again. Vieth explained what makes the QRF different than most units fighting in Afghanistan. "They're always going in to fight for someone else," said Vieth. "We don't want to let anyone down."



A Soldier from Kandahar Air Field's Quick Reaction Force maintains security during a humanitarian aid mission in snowy Central Afghanistan where they accompanied Afghan doctors and vaccinations for 160 children. Many of the villagers had not seen Soldiers before.



Capt. Craig Vieth meets with elders and a representative from the Kandahar City Ministry of Health during a whooping cough outbreak in Central Afghanistan. Capt. Vieth is part of a Quick Reaction Force deployed to Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The QRF delivered Afghan medical personnel and vaccinations to the site – not a typical mission for a combat unit. However, Capt. Vieth and the QRF Soldiers said they were "glad to be able to do something for the children."

Division commander receives meritorious award for work during OEF



Courtesy photo

The U.S. Agency for International Development presents an award to Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson Feb. 25 for his work in Afghanistan.

By Maj. Stacy Bathrick and
Master Sgt. Terry Anderson
CJTF-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The U.S. Agency for International Development recently recognized a top American general for his efforts in providing stability and security for Afghanistan.

Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 76 and 25th Infantry Division (Light), received a meritorious award Feb. 25 on behalf of USAID for his work in furthering the reconstruction and development in Afghanistan and for extending the reach of USAID. According to Patrick Fine, the mission director for USAID, Olson was recognized for his leadership and for the outstanding quality of partnership that he fostered and built with USAID.

“Maj. Gen. Olson has been a tremendous partner to USAID by championing new ways for our two organizations to work together,” Fine said. “His vision of how our organizations can work together has been instru-

mental in an effective overall U.S. counter insurgency and stabilization program.”

This was the first time USAID has presented a military member with such an award.

The award signifies the importance of combining military and economic strength to win in a conflict such as Afghanistan, said Fine. The award also recognized that USAID and the military are natural allies and that our country is best served by combining the strengths of these two great organizations, Fine added.

With Olson’s assistance, USAID now has representatives across Afghanistan at CJTF-76’s 14 Provincial Reconstruction Teams, three regional command headquarters and the CJTF-76 headquarters. CJTF-76 troops moved into areas where Soldiers had never been before, helping to provide security and eliminating the environment that breeds terrorism.

“USAID has been instrumental in supporting the reconstruction and development effort,” said Olson. “For USAID to recognize the important contributions of the coalition to the overall

reconstruction and development effort was especially significant to me and very gratifying.”

Olson said that although it was a personal award he received, that he received it on behalf of the 17,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians who comprise CJTF-76.

“Reconstruction and development has been important in winning over the Afghan population and making them see that the coalition offers a preferable alternative to the one the Taliban has held out,” said Olson.

“USAID and the U.S. military are natural allies in the Global War on Terrorism,” said Fine. “In countries like Afghanistan where stabilization and reconstruction are an essential part of the mission, it makes sense for USAID and the U.S. military to work together.”

Olson transferred command of CJTF-76 to Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya from the Southern European Task Force from Vicenza, Italy March 15, leaving a legacy behind that will benefit Afghanistan for generations to come.

New law improves TriCare benefits for Reservists and families

TriWest Healthcare Alliance
Release

In the coming months, Reservists and their families can expect additional improvements in TriCare benefits as a result of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2005, which was signed into law last October.

Several temporary TRICARE benefits that were authorized by previous legislation are made permanent or extended by NDAA 2005.

NDAA permanently authorizes TriCare eligibility for up to 90 days before an active duty reporting date for reservists who have delayed effective date orders to serve on active duty in support of a contingency operation for more than 30 days and for their families.

Also made permanent is the Transitional Assistance Management Program, a 180-day, post-deactivation transitional TriCare benefit for eligible members and their families. NDAA authorizes the DoD to prescribe in regulations for physical examination that each member must receive prior to separating from active duty service.

The TriCare Reserve Family Demonstration Project, which ensures timely access to health care for families of activated reservists, has been extended through Oct. 31, 2005, to help ensure seamless implementation of these provisions. The demonstration project,



which began on Sept. 14, 2001, was originally due to end Nov. 1, 2004.

The new legislation authorizes waiving the TriCare Standard and Extra deductibles for the family of Reserve members who are ordered to active duty for more than 30 days. This will help reduce the financial hardships of activation for members who have civilian coverage by avoiding a potential double payment of health care deductibles. The annual TriCare Extra or TriCare Standard deductible, depending upon the service member’s status, is \$50 - \$300.

TriCare is authorized by NDAA 2005 to pay up to 115 percent of the TriCare Maximum Allowable Charge to non-participating providers who treat family members of the activated Selected Reserves. This allows DoD to protect the beneficiary from “balance billing” for an amount up to 15 percent above the TMAC and enhances continuity of care for these family members with their civilian providers.

New Program Created: TriCare Reserve Select

NDAA 2005 creates a new program called “TriCare Reserve Select.” This program will give Reserve and National Guard members – who meet certain eligibility criteria – the opportunity to purchase TriCare Standard-like health care coverage for themselves and their family members after they demobilize. It is anticipated that the specific details about this new program will be available in the near future. The following is a general description of the benefit plan, which will be more fully outlined by DoD in the next few months.

According to the initial description of the TriCare Reserve Select program, Reserve Component members, who have committed to continued service in the selected Reserve for one year or more, qualify for TRS coverage:

- National Guard and Reserve members who served on active duty in support of a contingency operation for 90 days or more, on or after Sept. 11, 2001, and

who were released from active duty before Oct. 28, 2004, or within 180 days of that date, may enter into an agreement to serve continuously in the Selected Reserve for a period of one or more years and begin participation in TriCare Reserve Select at that time. For example, if an RC member was activated for one year in support of contingency operations, they would be eligible to sign up for four years of TRS coverage while obligating himself to serve in the selected Reserve for that same four years.

- This agreement to serve

must be approved by the member’s unit and must be entered into within one year of Oct. 28, 2004.

- TRICARE Standard-like coverage under this program will begin the day after the RC member’s eligibility for 180 days of TAMP Program coverage ends.

- For every 90 days of consecutive active duty service, RC members and their eligible family members may purchase one year of TRICARE Standard-like coverage for the same period they commit to serve in the selected Reserves.

- Members will be able to purchase the new TRS coverage on a self-only or self-and-family basis. The monthly premium amount has not yet been determined.

- TriCare Reserve Select members will not be eligible for care at military treatment facilities nor for MTF pharmacy benefits. They also will not be eligible for TriCare Prime Remote or TriCare Prime Remote for active duty family members.

Visit www.tricare.osd.mil or www.triwest.com for more information about TriCare coverage for Reservists.

Coalition doctors give girl a reason to smile



Capt. Winnie Paul poses with Zaleikha, 10, who used to cover her mouth with her hand when she smiled. Now that she's received surgery to correct her cleft lip March 2, she's all smiles.

Courtesy photo

By 2nd Lt. Christy Kercheval
 Combined Joint Task Force 76
 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Knowing the skills of the coalition doctors at Bagram, Zaleikha and her uncle hoped just showing up at the Bagram gate would be enough.

The pair traveled from Farah, on the other side of Afghanistan from Bagram, to see if coalition surgeons could operate on 10-year-old Zaleikha and repair her cleft palate.

Once the doctors were made aware of the girl's needs, they were eager to do what they could for her. Col. Dallas Homas, a Combined Joint Task Force 76 surgeon, deployed here with the 25th Infantry Division (Light), performed the surgery March 2 at the U.S. hospital at Bagram.

Afterwards he said he was pleased with the operation, and it went well and looked very good.

Homas also said that immediately following the procedure, Zaleikha's uncle was very happy and was smiling, and repeatedly gave the troops in the hospital the thumbs-up sign.

Zaleikha and her uncle were eager to begin the long journey back from the Bagram hospital shortly after the surgery, so coalition doctors armed them with antibiotic ointment to prevent infection, preventative antibiotic medication and Tylenol for the pain.

They were also encouraged to visit the Farah Provincial Reconstruction Team to see the physician's assistant and get the sutures removed.

Capt. Winnie Paul, a physician's assistant at the Farah PRT treated Zaleikha Thursday, and removed her sutures, "She looked great and was all smiles."

One of the more noticeable things, she said, was that Zaleikha no longer covered her mouth with her hand, "she looked quite happy and in no distress when we saw her,"



Courtesy photo

Zaleikha, 10, and her uncle traveled across Afghanistan, to Bagram in the hopes that the doctors could perform a surgery to fix her cleft lip.

Paul said.

Paul said she was glad to see her come to the PRT for treatment and was even more pleased to know that they had made a friend. Though she no longer needs the assistance of the doctors, Zaleikha said she would come to visit again soon in a few weeks, "just to say hello."

A two-hour procedure in an operating room in Bagram made all the difference for one Afghan girl and her family, and gave the coalition forces involved something they'll never forget.

Army announces contest to name book on future

By Zachary Gildin
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Army is holding a competition to see who can come up with the best title for a book about the future Army that will be published in June.

The book, which will consist of six vignettes, is aimed at informing and educating both military and non-military audiences about the future of the Army during the period 2015 and beyond.

The book will look at the continued evolution and transformation of the Army from the perspectives of Soldiers serving in what are now projected to be called Units of Action, Units of Employment – all equipped with the Future Combat System and other new types of equipment.

Each vignette will focus on a differ-

ent scenario: Arrival, Skirmish, Hostage Rescue, Battle, Stability Operations and Home Front, and Transition and Redeployment.

“Each of these scenarios will be depicted in a novel-like format that will allow the reader to gain a broad cross-section of perspectives from Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers,” said Lt. Col. (Ret.) Robert Leonhard, the principal author and a senior staff member at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.

“The reader will be able to visualize the Soldiers in their surroundings and gain an understanding of their roles as well as the enhanced operational capabilities the advanced equipment available at that time will give them. It will allow the reader to feel like they are part of the action.”

Not only will this style of writing be

more interesting for the readers and make them feel like they are in the story, but it will also help to aid the readers’ comprehension of what the Army of the future will look like.

This book will help civilians, military personnel in and out of the Army, government officials, and others understand more about the Army’s transformation, officials said. They said it is intended to promote a new perspective and understanding of the future of the Army that traditional summaries do not allow.

The novel-like format, they said, will help to facilitate understanding of future plans by showing rather than telling.

Along with facilitating the understanding of new and emerging information, the vignettes may indirectly help shape what the future composition of the Army will look like.

“The book will potentially have a positive influence on retention within the Army because junior-ranking soldiers, NCOs and officers will have a better appreciation of where the Army is going and hopefully can see themselves having an important role in that future force,” said Col. Mike Galloucis, project coordinator within the Office of the Chief of Staff. “The book may also indirectly help our recruiting efforts for the same reason because potential recruits will see how exciting the Army’s future vision is and realize they can be a part of it.”

The book-naming contest is open to everyone, civilian or military, including family members and retirees. Participants are encouraged to be creative in coming up with a title for the book.

“The name for the book should not only help highlight the content of the

book, but should also be something that captures the reader’s interest and helps to draw in potential readers,” said Maj. Doug Zadow, who in addition to working on this project on a daily basis, is heading up the competition to choose a name. The New Centurions, a book by Joe Wambaugh, was cited by Zadow as an example of a title meeting his criteria.

The person whose proposed title is chosen as the winner of the competition will be recognized by a senior Army leader and provided with a copy of the final publication.

Title proposals, which must be submitted by April 8, should be sent by email to Maj. Doug Zadow at Douglas.zadow@hqda.army.mil. The e-mail submissions should include at least one title suggestion, full name, rank or civilian title, e-mail address, mailing address and phone number.

Signal cases its colors

Chaplain (Capt.) Carron Naber

Lt. Col. Bevan R. Daley, 125th Signal Bn. Cmdr., and Master Sgt. Michael Wright, 125th Signal Bn. (FWD) acting battalion command sergeant major, cased the battalion’s colors on March 5 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The unit began returning to Hawaii this week, and will continue their redeployment through the end of April. The 350 Soldiers assigned to the battalion supported the 17,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians assigned to CJTF-76 who received Information Technology Support such as (Secure Voice and Data Telecommunications, VTC, Internet) throughout their year-long deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom.



Promotion

From A-1

Sgt. Miriam Ubiles is the non-commissioned officer in charge of promotions at the 556th Personnel Service Battalion on Schofield Barracks, and is overseeing the potential promotion of the 765 selected Soldiers.

“Memorandums have been sent out to all unit S1s telling commanders their deadline on why a Soldier should not be promoted,” she said.

The deadline was earlier this week, and Soldiers who made the final list will be able to view it on the Internet (www.perscomonline.army.mil/select/Enlisted.htm) on March 21.

Commanders who remove a Soldier from the automatic list

must first counsel the Soldier about why he or she is not being promoted to sergeant, Ubiles added.

Chief Warrant Officer Dennis Stribling is the officer in charge of promotions at the 556th PSB, and said that Soldiers put on the selection list on March 21 would be promoted to sergeant on April 1.

The Army has 31 Star MOS’s that range from fire support specialists to signal collection and identification specialists. Career fields in the 31 categories include: Artillery, aviation, armor, engineers, communications and information systems, signal, psychological operations, fire control, public affairs, maintenance, chemical, transportation, ordnance, supply and military intelligence.

Uncased

From A-1

between today’s ceremony and the one that took place more than a quarter century ago.

“These Soldiers (who) are coming back now, are getting great respect,” Weyand said.

Soldiers and family members stood and cheered for Olson, Ashe and the 30-plus Soldiers standing in formation during the ceremony.

Olson addressed the crowd and said the presidential elections in Iraq and Afghanistan were, “two major victories for the Tropic Lightning Division in the Global War on Terrorism.”

Olson asked for a moment of

silence for the thousands of Soldiers still deployed and for the fallen comrades who did not make it home. After bowing his head in silence, Olson addressed the crowd with tears in his eyes.

“I’d like to thank three groups that are here today,” Olson said. “First and foremost, our families, who were steadfast in their support of our deployment, kept things on track while we were gone, fixed the things that were broken that we couldn’t fix gone ... We come back to a beautiful Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Army Air Field, but more importantly, we come back to our beautiful families.”

After thanking the community for its support and use of training

facilities, Olson turned to the rear detachment team.

“Finally I’d like to thank Col. Mike McBride and the rear detachment,” Olson said.

“[These are] a tremendous group of Soldiers of whom I am absolutely certain, many times, were far busier than either of the Tropic Lightning contingents in Afghanistan or in Iraq.”

“Together, the Tropic Lightning Division contingent in Iraq, the Division Headquarters and troops in Afghanistan, and the whole crew here in the rear detachment have performed what I think is one of the most critical missions that the Tropic Lightning Division has ever conducted since the Vietnam War years,” Olson said.

Promotion (B)

From A-1

How it works

Soldiers placed on the promotion list automatically, without participating in a promotion board, will only be given the minimum of 350 points.

Those Soldiers will not be promoted to sergeant unless (1) their MOS falls below 100

percent operating strength and (2) no other Soldiers with more points are available to promote.

Soldiers who want to receive promotion points based on their actual accomplishments need to go through the promotion board procedures and the processes outlined in AR 600-8-9.

So, if a Soldier is placed on

the promotion list through this new policy, but has not gone to the board, they will not be awarded extra points for awards, PT, education or any other criteria or advantage like the Airborne promotion advantage.

(Editor’s Note: Compiled by Sharee Moore from an article written by Gary Sheftick, Army News Service).

Shindand Soldiers get a taste of Afghan markets

Story and photos by Spc. Cheryl Ransford
17th Public Affairs Det.

SHINDAND AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — As an escape from the everyday stresses of being deployed, the Soldiers and civilians at Shindand Airfield get a weekly break in the form of shopping in an Afghan market.

Once a week, local vendors come to the airfield in Western Afghanistan to offer their goods to the Soldiers here.

“Being able to shop at the bazaar gives the troops something to do,” said Spc. Daniel Rivera, Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment. “They are able to get a couple things they are missing by not being at home.”

At the bazaar, Soldiers are able to buy everything from CDs and DVDs to carpets, knives and antiques.

“The vendors who come to the base to sell their goods are local livestock traders and local laborers, as well as store keepers in Shindand village and Herat,” said 3rd Sqdn., 4th Cav. Rgt., Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Taylor.

When the bazaar first started in Shindand, there were only three car loads worth of vendors, said Taylor. Now, the bazaar has grown to include more than 30 vendors and camel and horse rides.

With the increase in vendors, the Soldiers are given a wider variety of items to choose from.

“It is a benefit to the Soldiers in that they are able to buy local items to send home as gifts and souvenirs to show others what they were able to see while they were in Afghanistan,” said Taylor.

Along with giving the Soldiers a break in day-to-day activities and providing them with a glimpse of another culture, the bazaar also helps the Afghans build their economy and gain an understanding of free enterprise.

“The local vendors are able to see what can be gained by selling their goods,” said Taylor. “For some it is a skill that they have never before had the opportunity to use.”

Although the bazaar is held just once a week, it still adds a richness to the lives of all involved that wouldn't otherwise be there.

Rivera said the chance to interact with people from another country while enjoying the past-time of shopping at “swap meets” gives the Soldiers a little extra bit of normalcy in their life that may be missing during the deployment.



Above: Chap (Capt.) Andrew Lawrence, 3rd Sqdn., 4th Cav. Rgt., looks at a rug at the Shindand Airfield bazaar. The vendors offer everything from rugs to DVDs and trinkets at reasonable prices to the Soldiers and civilians.

Left: Staff Sgt. Lance Fisher, Co. C, 367th Eng. Bn., looks at a vest before purchasing it from a local vendor at the Shindand Airfield bazaar.

Voting Assistance Program kicks off slogan contest

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Federal Voting Assistance Program is accepting entries until July 10 for its latest slogan contest.

The winning slogan will be featured in the FVAP's 2006-2007 media campaign, which will focus on increasing voter awareness among U.S. citizens worldwide and encouraging them to participate in the democratic process, officials said.

Slogans also will be posted on the FVAP Web site in the 2006-2007 Voting Assistance Guide, officials added, and on motivational posters, audiovisual materials and in other FVAP publications and manuals.

According to FVAP officials, the aim is to promote interest in voting among people covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act -- members of the uni-

formed services, the Merchant Marine, their families, and all U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

Submitted slogans should address the importance of voting or inspire someone to vote, and people may enter as many times as they like, but contest officials request that each entry be submitted separately. A panel of independent judges will choose the winning slogan based on originality and motivational value, officials said. The contest winners and runners-up will receive a certificate signed by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Entrants may submit their slogan by e-mail, fax or mail. It should include their full name, their service (if military), mailing address, daytime telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.

E-mail entries should be sent to slogan@fvap.ncr.gov and should be text only, one

slogan per e-mail, with contact information on each e-mail. Enter “Voting Slogan Contest” on the subject line. Due to security concerns, any e-mail message with an attachment will be deleted.

Slogans can be faxed to (703) 696-1352 or DSN 426-1352. The FVAP Web site has toll-free fax numbers from 51 countries. Submit separate page for each slogan with contact information on each page. No cover sheet is necessary.

People may also mail their entries to Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense, Attn: Voting Slogan Contest, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1155. If submitting by mail, type or print legibly on regular 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper, with one slogan per page and contact information on each page.

(Based on a Federal Voting Assistance Program release.)

Recruiting From A-1

hard to fill or require higher-level skills. Bonuses also help encourage recruits to sign up for longer terms of service or for specific duty stations, he said.

And in a new initiative being used by the Army, they encourage recruits to begin their duty more quickly after signing their contract. “If you report in one month, you get a certain bonus. If it's in two months, you get a different bonus,” Gilroy said. “The longer you delay, the lower the bonus, but if you want to ship right now, the Army will offer a higher bonus for

you.”

The Army is also reviewing its advertising program and looking at better ways to reach targeted audiences, including “influencers” — the parents, teachers, coaches and other adults who influence a young person's decision regarding military service.

Reaching this group can be a challenge, Gilroy acknowledged. “Mom and dad aren't too happy seeing their sons and daughters in a conflict,” he said, particularly as they hear of soldiers being wounded or killed in combat. “And I think this is weighing heavily on their minds,” he added.

There's also an indication that there's less public support for the war in Iraq, Gilroy said, and that could be a factor in why influencers aren't steering young people toward military service as frequently as in the past.

Gilroy said the Army is hopeful these and other efforts being explored will help attract more young people into the Army at a critical time, when it is increasing its end strength by 30,000 members.

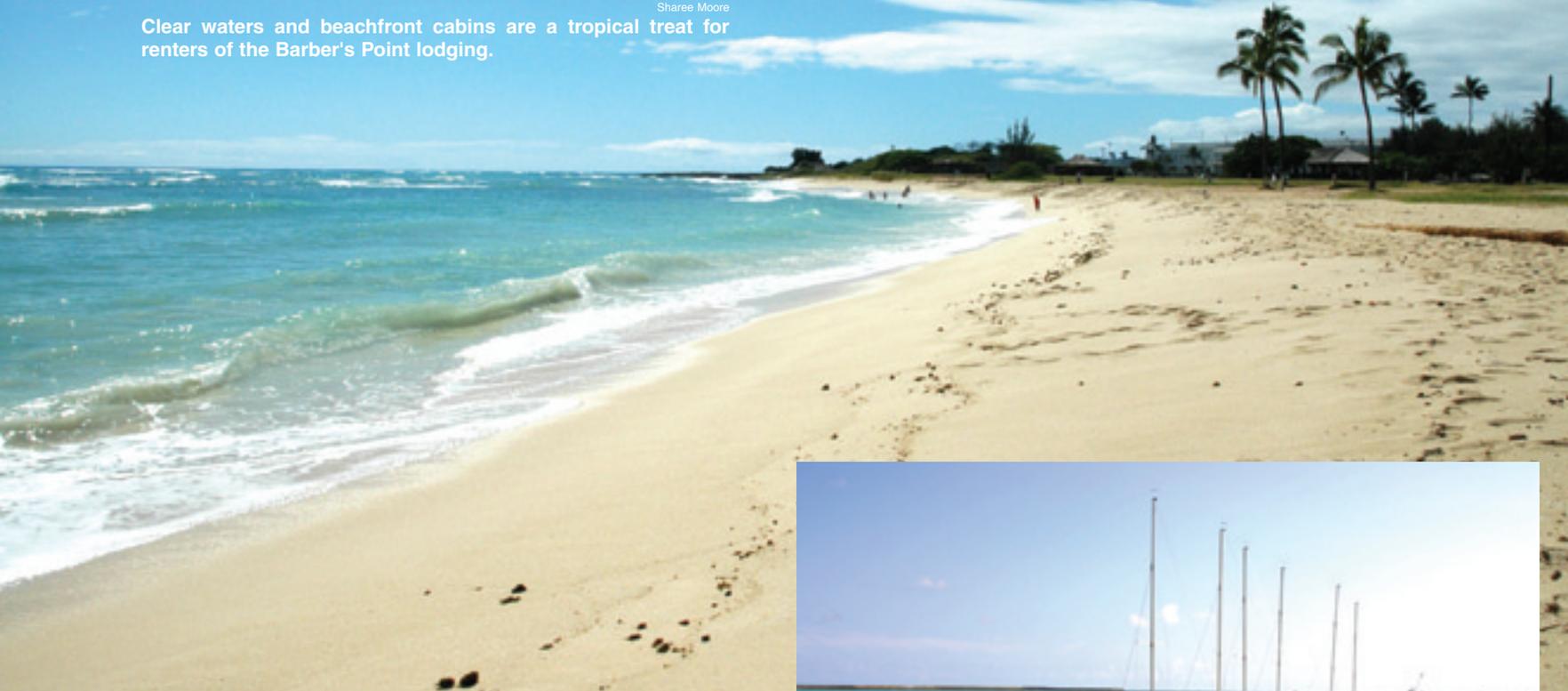
The Army's recruiting goal for fiscal 2005 is 80,000 troops — 3,000 higher than last year's requirement and 6,200 higher than the previous year's.



Outdoor recreation centers

Clear waters and beachfront cabins are a tropical treat for renters of the Barber's Point lodging.

Sharee Moore



Rafi Grant

Hickam's boat harbor offers a place for military to rent watercraft and "park" personal boats for a fee.

By Rafi Grant
Contributing Writer

The beautiful year-round climate, warm ocean waters, sandy beaches, stunning mountain views, and rich flora and fauna of the Hawaiian Islands attract thousand of tourists every year.

But not only tourists call Hawaii a destination of dreams.

The Pacific islands are also a highly requested military duty station: hitting the waves before work, PT on the beach, a run or bike ride in the afternoon sun, maybe a sailing or kayaking trip on the weekend, or a scuba dive to experience the colorful underwater world of the Pacific make the time in Hawaii a unique experience.

Recreational opportunities in Hawaii are many, from fun in the water to adventure on land.

A wide range of outdoor opportunities are available through the military's Morale, Welfare and Recreation departments. Outdoor recreational centers offer cost-saving opportunities on everything from weekend bike rentals, to guided hiking tours, to deep sea fishing and surfing lessons.

"The military (recreation) centers have everything you need for weekend fun," Nicole Keller from the Hickam Air Force Base



Rafi Grant

Two-person kayaks are available for rental at the harbor on Hickam Air Force Base.

Outdoor Recreational Center said.

The Hickam center rents gear and equipment for sports and water sports, as well as must-haves for camping and parties.

"Our collection ranges from soccer- and volleyballs, surf- and body boards, to canapés, bounce houses, shaved ice cream machines, and grills," Keller explained.

While the Hickam Recreation Center provides the material, Hickam Harbor offers the user manual.

The skilled instructors get interested parties in the water and teach them the basics of sailing, surfing, windsurfing, and kayaking.

A crowd favorite is the group surfing lessons.

For \$30, beginners get a four-hour taste of riding the waves.

"We teach them the basics of surfing, from how to stand on the board and paddling, to

how to catch a wave," Outdoor Recreation Programmer Pamela Werling said.

And in the \$30 lesson Werling and her team include an introduction to 'how to deal with the water creatures.'

"Beginners are sometimes concerned about the sharks. But, the sharks in the ocean are a given and they usually don't attack, and it's a must to try the surf here on the island," Werling added.

For those who prefer the freshest catch on the dinner plate, the harbor crew offers



Rafi Grant

The Seabreeze on Hickam Air Force Base features buffet, American and Hawaiian-style cuisines, outdoor seating and a view of the ocean. It is also a popular meeting place for large and small groups.

an attractive opportunity: spear fishing, and according to Werling, pound fish are the regular catch of the day.

Another popular outdoor activity is scuba diving.

Schofield Barracks Outdoor Center offers weekend classes to obtain the Paddy (a scuba certification).

"The course includes four pool and four open water dives, and teaches the beginners how to handle the equipment as well as the aquatic environment," manager Juan Sponberg said.

In addition to the dive courses, the Schofield Barracks Center has a full range of equipment rentals as well.

For a vacation literally "away from it all," visit the

Pililaau Army Recreation Center in Waianae. Rent fully-loaded cabins complete with grills, AC, cable and one to three bedroom digs. There's even daily maid service. Reservations can be made up to a year in advance.

The Outdoor Center at the Rainbow Marina at Pearl Harbor has a wide ranging program for the youth, in addition to free adult sailing classes and sailing regattas.

"We have youth sailing programs planned for the summer, as well as ongoing sailing lessons for children of 8 years and up," Recreation Center Assistant Joshua Long said.

The Pearl Harbor Recreation Center is the one-stop-shop for outdoor activists who don't enjoy getting wet.

The center's team offers a variety of hikes to explore the various ecosystems of the island, including the Manoa Falls and Kailua.

"The hikes are from easy to strenuous and usually cost \$5 including transportation,

guide and gear," Recreational Specialist Bianca Balthus said.

While the outdoor centers on the island offer a variety of possibilities to be active, the military beaches such as White Plains, Nimitz or Hickam Beaches and Bellows Beach Park invite one to kick back and relax and enjoy the laid back life "a la Hawaiian."

Hawaii is a recreational paradise and time is often flying by fast before the next PCS date knocks on the door.

"Enjoy the island and all it offers, 'cause there aren't many duty stations where you can hit the surf before you go to work," a Soldier due to PCS in June said.

For more information on rentals and programs call the Schofield Barracks Center at 655-0143; Pililaau Army Recreation Center at 696-4158; Hickam Outdoor Center at 449-687; Hickam Harbor at 449-5215; Pearl Harbor Center at 473-1198; and the Pearl Harbor Rainbow Marina at 473-0279.



Sharee Moore

Nimitz Beach cottages on Barber's Point sport two bedroom quarters with kitchenette and living area. The beachfront cabins are excellent for family gatherings or a quiet get-away. Renters should be aware that termites and ants may swarm and tents, campfires and pets are strictly prohibited.



This Week at the MOVIES

SGT. SMITH THEATER

Today
The Wedding Date
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Saturday March 19
The Wedding Date
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Sunday March 20
Phantom of the Opera
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Monday March 21
Closed

Tuesday March 22
Closed

Wednesday March 23
Closed

Thursday March 24
Phantom of the Opera
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Salute the Troops Concert Series – Live local entertainment at The Tropics, Schofield Barracks, every Friday night in April at 8:30 p.m., no cover charge. Listen to “Upstanding Youth” on April 1, “Primal Tribe” on April 8 and “808” on April 15. Enjoy free entertainment, drink specials, and food from MacGregor’s Market. Visit the Tropics and register to win a sport utility vehicle. Finalists selected at each concert event. At concert series’ end (approximately June, date to be announced), finalists will select a random key that may start the SUV. If your key starts the vehicle, you drive away in a new SUV. Visit the Tropics or call 655-0002 for information.

Spouses Night Out – At Schofield Barracks Army Community Service, March 24, 6:30 p.m., learn tips for instant relaxation and discover how hypnotherapy can help you. Presenter is Maria Endler, Director of Hawaii Hypnotherapy Association. Come early and eat a pizza dinner at 6 p.m. Call 655-2736 to sign up. MWR Blue Star Card holders receive free child care from 6 - 9 p.m. by reservation only at Peterson Child Care Center. Call 655-3929 by noon of the Tuesday before each Thursday event to make reservations. Reservations can be made two weeks in advance. Call 655-2400 for information.

Intramural Bowling – Seeking teams from units, sections, or directorates in the Fort Shafter area. Call 438-

6733.
Hawaii Army Family Action Planning – The Hawaii Army Family Action Plan is designed to improve the quality of life in the U.S. Army Hawaii community by receiving input from its community members. Make a difference by submitting issues or comments online at www.mwrarmyhawaii.com, or by e-mail to HAFAP@schofield.army.mil, or by calling 655-2744. These issues will be discussed in a forum on April 18 - 19 at the Nehelani, Schofield Barracks. Call 655-2744 for HAFAP information.

PT in the Park – Join the fun April 5, at Bennett Youth Center Field, Schofield Barracks, 6:30 - 7:30 a.m. or at the Fort Shafter Gym, April 26, 6:30 - 7:30 a.m. Participating children receive custom Army PT shirts and enjoy a free continental breakfast. The event features an exciting and high energy Disney Mousersize aerobic routine led by mouse instructors, a fun event for the whole family. Call 438-9336.

Lost in Paradise Update – Find out which battalion has won our Lost in Paradise program on March 26, at approximately 1:30 p.m. at the Family Fun Fest on Sills Field, Schofield Barracks. Winners receive a \$1,000 party at the Nehelani and participants receive a free three-month membership to the Health and Fitness Center on Schofield Barracks. Participating battalions were: 556th Personnel Support Battalion, 1-62nd Air

Defense Artillery, 524th CSB, 65th Eng. Bn., 1st Bn., 14th Inf. Rgt., HHC, DISCOM, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Rgt., 3rd Bn., 7th FA Rgt., 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., 2nd Bn., 11th FA Rgt., and 25th MP Brigade. May the biggest “losers” win.

Schofield Barracks Teen Job Expo – Visit the Tropics, March 22, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Meet different companies, receive job information, find out what programs are available for teens, receive make-up and wardrobe tips, enter contests, and more. Call 655-8522.

Water Exercise Class – Richardson Pool, Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. - noon. Cost is \$2 per class or purchase a punch card for \$15 (10 classes). Call 655-9698.

Summer Learn to Swim Program – Learn to Swim takes participants level by level from their first step into the water to ease and proficiency with standard swimming skills. Registration for Level I (introduction to water skills) accepted beginning March 26, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., at Richardson Pool, Schofield Barracks. Cost is \$40 for nine, 45-minute classes, and a multi-child discount is offered. Registration is first-come, first-served. Call 655-9698. The Tripler, Helemano and Aliamanu pools will also hold a Level I and other courses. Registration in these areas begins in June. Call your nearest pool for information.

Intramural Softball Season – Participate in this year’s Intramural Softball season, May 2 - Aug. 26. Pick up applications at the USAG-HI Sports Office or Martinez Physical Fitness Center and hand them in no later than April 22. Call 655-0856 or 655-0101 for information.

Family Fun Fest and ITR Travel Fair – Enjoy food, fun, entertainment and travel information for the whole family on March 26, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Sills Field, Schofield Barracks. Children events include fun runs, inflatables, rides, activities, crafts, pictures with the Easter bunny and more. Check out travel deals offered by a variety of local businesses and hourly door prizes. Entertainment provided by the Polynesian Cultural Center, as well as demonstrations of magic, Irish dance, karate and more. Fun run schedule is: 9 a.m., 50 yards, age 2 and under; 9:15 a.m., 100 yards, ages 3 and 4; 9:30 a.m., 800 yards, ages 5 and 6; 9:45 a.m., one mile, ages 7 and above. Visit www.mwrarmyhawaii.com for information and schedules or call 655-0110 or 655-0112.

Free Salsa Lesson – Free salsa lesson, March 24, 5:30 - 7 p.m. at the Health and Fitness Center, Schofield Barracks. Salsa classes offered

in April on Thursdays, 5:30 - 7 p.m. for \$25 a month. Call 655-8007.

Pure Gold Dance Team Performance – The dance team will perform at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks, Saturday, 7 p.m. Call 655-0002 for information.

Richardson Pool is Open – Richardson Pool on Schofield Barracks is open. Hours are: Mon - Fri, active duty physical training, 6 - 8 a.m., open swim, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Open swim on weekends from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Call 655-1128 for information.

Blue Star Card Program Closing – The Blue Star Card Program for spouses of deployed Soldiers will end as Soldiers redeploy. Operation Iraqi Freedom cards, those with a blue background, are valid until March 31. Operation Enduring Freedom cards, yellow background, are valid until April 30. The program will continue for units returning after this date. Program end date will be publicized. Green background cards issued for the 29th Brigade Combat Team and the 100th and 442nd Infantry Regiments are valid through 2006. Visit your Installation Access Pass Office to receive your Blue Star card. Call 438-0572 or 655-1620.

Sgt. Yano Library Day Closure – The Sgt. Yano Library, Schofield Barracks is closed Sunday for quarterly carpet cleaning. Call 655-8002.

“Miss Saigon” – Fort Shafter’s Richardson Theatre presents “Miss Saigon,” a classic love story of an American Soldier and Vietnamese girl. Performances held tonight and final performance is Saturday, curtain at 7:30 p.m. Adult tickets, \$25 and children under 12, \$17. Adult subject matter not recommended for children under 12. For tickets, visit the box office Mon - Fri, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Or, call 438-4480.

Easter Sunday Brunch at Hale Ikena – Featuring a breakfast station, chilled shrimp, smoked salmon, garlic pepper crusted prime rib, furikaki crusted mahi mahi and more, March 27, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Cost is \$23.95 for adults and children’s prices are available. Now taking reservations. Call 438-1974.

Wine and Dine at Nehelani – March 23, an evening of wine and a gourmet four-course dinner including soup and salad, appetizer, entrée, and dessert. Each course served with a selected wine. Dinner starts at 6 p.m. Reservations accepted through March 18. Cost is \$29 for adults. For reservations, call 655-0660.

Easter Buffet at Waianae Beach Club – An Easter breakfast buffet, March 27,

8:30 - 11 a.m. or an Easter Dinner Buffet served from 5:30 - 9 p.m. at the Waianae Beach Club. Call 696-4778.

Right Arm Night, Salsa Style – March 24, 3:30 - 10 p.m. at the Nehelani on Schofield Barracks. Appetizers served from 4 - 7 p.m. Enjoy fun, food, entertainment, and great prizes. Civilians and all ranks welcome. Tickets before March 24, \$5 per person. Tickets on March 24, \$7 per person. Adults only, must be 18 years or older to attend. For ticket information, call 655-4466.

Hawaiian Luau Lunch Buffet – Taste a traditional Hawaii style feast March 25, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Hale Ikena, Fort Shafter or Reggie’s, Schofield Barracks. Cost is \$9.95 per person. Call the Nehelani 655-4466 or Hale Ikena at 438-1974 for reservations or information.

Bunny Brunch at Nehelani – Join the Easter bunny, March 27, for an all-you-can eat brunch featuring breakfast favorites with a ham and beef carving station and more. Brunch from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Cost is \$18.95 for adults and children’s pricing is available. For reservations, call 655-0660.

Twilight Golf Family Special – Dependents 17 years of age and under are free with paid adult family member, March 24, Nagorski Golf Course. Green fee and care fee is included. Call 438-9587.

Tropics Extreme Teen Challenge – Come meet the challenge and test your skills March 23, starts 2 p.m. Grand prize is \$50. Register ends Saturday at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks. Parental release required. Call 655-8522.

Craft Vendors Wanted – Seeking craft vendors for the Family Fun Fest and ITR Travel Fair March 26, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Sills Field at Schofield Barracks. Call Leisure Activities, 655-0110 or 655-0112.

New Sports Night at Reggie’s – Every Monday, 4 - 9 p.m. join the excitement with a special sports bar menu and watch your favorite sports program on satellite. Call 655-0660.

Spring Break Youth Art Classes – Register children for spring break art classes offered at the Arts and Crafts Center, Schofield Barracks. Classes March 23 - 30, 10:30 a.m. - Noon, and open to youth ages 7 - 11. Activities include woodcrafts, March 23, shrink art, March 24, create your own puzzle, March 25, foto frame fun, March 26, and paint n’ take, March 30. \$12 per class or \$10 per class for two or more classes. Call 655-4202 for registration and information.

HACN TV Schedule March 18 - 24

Morning		Evening	
6:00	Sign on	3:32	OAHU-Aloha Begins
6:30	What’s Down the Drain	3:40	Welcome Home
6:36	Fit for Life	3:44	Volunteers
7:00	Bulletin Board	3:54	Safety Video
7:30	SHAMU-Wild Life, Grasslands	4:00	Pentagon Channel
8:00	Army News Watch		
8:30	Pentagon Channel	6:00	Bulletin Board
9:00	Pentagon Channel	6:30	Community Focus
10:00	ASAP	6:42	Welcome Home
10:30	Bulletin Board	6:47	Army Values-Respect
11:20	Safety Video	6:56	Safety Video
11:24	Dash and Grab	7:00	NFL-Turf Talk
11:30	Hawaii Hidden Beauty, Danger	8:00	Bulletin Board
11:52	Welcome Home	8:45	History of JAG
12:00	Pentagon Channel	9:00	Anti Terrorism FP
		9:30	Oakland Army Base
		10:00	Youth Protection
		11:00	NFL-Greatest Games
		12:14	Bulletin Board
		1:00	What’s Down the Drain
Afternoon		Overnight	
2:02	What’s Down the Drain	12:51	Pentagon Channel
2:10	Dash and Grab		
2:19	Safety Video		
2:22	Welcome Home		
2:30	SHAMU-Rumble in Jungle		
3:00	SHAMU-Great Ape Story		

Redeploying Soldiers: ‘Buyers beware!’

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
Staff Writer

Many Soldiers deployed in the past year have something in common — more money in their pockets to spend.

With threats of scams and rip-off artists, Soldiers and their families are encouraged to think before spending that hard-earned deployment cash.

Charles Beaucond is a financial planner with the Financial Readiness Program at Army Community Services on Schofield Barracks. His job is to teach Soldiers how to manage their money better.

“We haven’t run into a lot of financial issues yet because people are just coming back and enjoying leave, and reintegrating back into the community,” Beaucond said. “(But) it seems like a lot of people are buying cars. I’ve seen a lot of new cars around post.”

Beaucond warns about spending too much money, too fast after coming home.

“Be careful about major purchases, especially right after you get back,” he said. “Understand that your paycheck is going to be changing over the next couple months because you’re not going to have the pay that you’ve been receiving ... you’re (also) going to pay income tax again.”

“I’d be a little bit hesitant about making a major purchase right away,” he said. “Maybe wait a little while when you’re back on ground, and back from leave ... give it some time, and then think about it.”

Beaucond said the key to saving deployment monies is to budget.

“It sounds simple, but a lot of people spend more money than they make,” Beaucond said. “Most of the clients we run into don’t have a written budget. The ones that don’t have a written budget seem to struggle the most ... especially [Soldiers] living



Graphic by Tony Verceluz

paycheck-to-paycheck. They really don’t know where their money is going. If you have a written budget, you’re not going to struggle as much because of your written plan.”

Beaucond said ACS offers free financial advice on purchases and financial planning. Soldiers struggling with their finances may soon find themselves in the sights of rip-off companies. For example: payday loans.

“Those are probably among the worst scams that Soldiers can run into ... because you’re paying interest on that money from anywhere between 700 to 1600 percent,” he said. “I’ve personally had a client in the office a year ago that, their effective interest rate would have been

1600 percent if they’d taken a whole year to pay the loan off.

“Payday loans are probably the worst thing you could get involved in,” he reiterated. “I’ve seen more Soldiers hurt financially and professionally with payday loans. Those would be places to avoid under all circumstances. There’s just no emergency big enough that you would need to go there.”

Although some companies are out there to make a profit at the Soldiers’ expense, Beaucond said most companies around Hawaii are honest businesses.

“I think our local merchants are going to be more than fair,” he said. “I think Soldiers will be targets in such places as Internet sales pitches;

things of that nature.

“If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is,” Beaucond said. “If it sounds like it’s unbelievable, it’s probably not true.”

Soldiers wishing for legal advice can always get it free at the Legal Assistance Office on Schofield Barracks. Maj. Craig Merutka, U.S. Army, Hawaii deputy staff judge advocate said attorneys are here to help Soldiers and their families with any legal advice, including sales contracts.

“Soldiers are coming back with a big chunk of money in their pocket,” Merutka said. “What they need to be aware of is the ‘good deal.’ There’s a chance when Soldiers go out and spend their money on a spur-of-the-

moment, they may get ripped off.

“They need to take their time before buying anything, by shopping around and getting the best quality and best price,” he said.

Merutka said sales contracts are usually where Soldiers will get scammed.

“Read everything,” Merutka said. “If you’re asked to sign something, read it, and read it carefully. A lot of times the words get awfully small. They like to use the fine print. Read the fine print,” he warned.

“If they [Soldiers and family members] do not understand the fine print, our recommendation is don’t necessarily ask the vendor what it’s saying, but rather take it to our Legal Assistance Office and have an attorney review it [for free],” he said. “They’ll give you what it really means.”

Merutka echoed Beaucond regarding the integrity of local merchants.

“Ninety-nine percent of the people out there aren’t out to rip anyone off, but there’s that 1 percent you got to look out for.”

Beaucond said the person holding the money before the sale is responsible for what happens, and it’s up to them to make thought-out choices.

“Anything is always ‘buyer beware,’” he said. “If you ever have a question about a financial purchase, come and speak with us [at ACS] first, because we’ll give you unbiased advice. Our job is to help the Soldiers and family members out. We’re not going to make any extra money on what we say or don’t say, so my advice would be, if you have any questions about a major purchase, come and talk with us.”

Contact ACS at 655-2400 for more information about Financial Planning classes, and the Legal Assistance Office at 655-8607 or 655-8608 to speak with an attorney. All financial services and legal advice are free for Soldiers and their families.

Schofield celebrates Red Cross Month, volunteers

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
Staff Writer

American Red Cross volunteers at Schofield Barracks were recognized for their selfless efforts during a ceremony March 10 at the Nehelani on Schofield Barracks.

The ceremony honored the 76 volunteers who donated more than 16,000 hours of their time in 2004. Twenty awards were handed out for service, and four categories of distinguished awards were presented.

"This is our day to give back to them," said Beth Weber, Red Cross station coordinator for Schofield Barracks.

"President (Bush) designated March as Red Cross Month, so that we could get recognized for the volunteer work we do," Weber said. "We're a non-governmental agency, so all the [donations] we get from the

community, we give back to the community."

According to redcross.org, the Red Cross held no regular fund-raising drives during the first 25 years of its existence. Since Clara Barton created the organization in 1881, it was largely dependent on publicity and funds from the spontaneous support of people who learned of catastrophic events and the Red Cross response to them.

When news of an event broke, the American Red Cross rushed to the scene with help, and people around the U.S. provided torrents of volunteer assistance, donations of funds and supplies.

The Red Cross also says on its Web site, there was an abrupt change in 1917 when the U.S. entered World War I. After declaring war, President Wilson ordered the American Red Cross to raise funds to support its aid

"I request that during that month (March) our people rededicate themselves to the splendid aims and activities of the Red Cross."

- President Franklin D. Roosevelt

to the military and civilians affected by war, as Congress had mandated.

In response, the Red Cross held its first national War Fund drive in June 1917 and a \$100 million goal,

an astoundingly large sum at the time. Under the circumstances, however, the public response was immediate and overwhelming. Within a few days, more than \$115 million was raised.

During World War II, President Roosevelt declared the month of March 1943 "Red Cross Month." The Red Cross set a goal of \$125 million, the largest amount ever requested in one campaign by any American organization. Again, the response was overwhelming.

It took less than six weeks to reach the target, and by June 1943 donations totaled nearly \$146 million. Roosevelt called it, "the greatest single crusade of mercy in all of history."

This success caused the Red Cross to repeat the March drive during the remaining years of the war and then to make it the occasion of its annual

membership and fund-raising efforts. As part of the tradition, the president customarily issues a proclamation each year declaring March as Red Cross Month.

With the recent tsunami disaster in the Pacific, Red Cross donations and volunteers are still showing their commitment to excellence.

"The Red Cross raised all of its money for the Tsunami Fund [goal] that they wanted to reach," Weber said. "Even though we're not expecting stuff for the Tsunami Fund, because the goal was met, we're accepting donations for things like disaster training and [emergency relief] for local communities."

To volunteer at the American Red Cross, make donations, or to learn more about how you can make a difference in your community, call the Schofield Barracks Red Cross station at 655-4927.

Distractions abound at SAMC board

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
CTF Thunder Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — The Combined Task Force Thunder chapter of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club held a board here March 8 to test potential club members and determine if they are worthy of being inducted into the prestigious club.

Instead of having each candidate appear inside before all board members, the board was held outside at the base basketball court with candidates rotating around to different senior noncommissioned officers who grilled them on specific subjects.

While answering the NCOs' questions, candidates had to block out such distractions as helicopters passing overhead and other people walking by as daily life on the base went on around them.

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Dorey, president of the CTF Thunder chapter of the SAMC, said it was decided to hold the board outside to add another element to the already stressful nature of the board.

"What better way to represent Audie Murphy's actions than to have the board outside in the elements with the sounds of the Army and Marine weaponry to replicate battlefield distractions," he said. "I think this factor added to the rigorous evaluations that the NCOs had to perform."

In a combat environment like Afghanistan, Soldiers don't always get a lot of down time. And when they do, it doesn't usually involve studying.

Staff Sgt. Torry Rice, a platoon sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, said it was more of a challenge preparing for the board here, as opposed to the rear, because of the operations tempo.

"Back home you get to go home, relax and study on your own," he said. "Here, you're a 24-hour Soldier. Anything could happen at any time and you got



First Sgt. Charles Miller quizzes Sgt. 1st Class Audie D. Matheus, Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, during the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club board March 8 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

to be ready for all contingencies."

Rice said his down time got cut to a bare minimum. A normal duty day for him at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E in Paktika Province was anywhere from 10 to 14 hours.

"After that I'd start studying and then get about five hours of sleep if I was lucky," Rice said.

But all the hard work paid off and down the road, Rice said it will be more special knowing that he became a member of the club while deployed to a combat zone.

Dorey agreed, saying Murphy, who was America's

most decorated Soldier of World War II, overcame many obstacles, against overwhelming odds, exemplifying the determination and commitment of the U.S. combat Soldier.

"What a better way to earn the prestige of becoming a member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club than doing it while performing a combat mission," Dorey said.

This was the second time CTF Thunder held a Sgt. Audie Murphy Club board here. On Dec. 11, 16 noncommissioned officers from across Regional Command East faced the board, and all passed.

The following Soldiers appeared before the SAMC board March 8, received GO's from all board members and will be inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club:

Sgt. 1st Class Audie D. Matheus, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt.
Sgt. 1st Class Troy C. Baylis, HHB, CTF Thunder
Sgt. 1st Class Fredrick D. Warren, HHB, CTF Thunder
Sgt. 1st Class Gary E. Wright, HHB, CTF Thunder
Staff Sgt. Shane K. Ahnee, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt.
Staff Sgt. David E. Alexander, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt.
Staff Sgt. Anthony C. Bowdrie, HHB, CTF Thunder
Staff Sgt. Maurice K. Brittain, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt.
Staff Sgt. David Garcia, HHD, LTF 524
Staff Sgt. Omri Ibi, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt.
Staff Sgt. Bethany R. Matthews, HHB, CTF Thunder
Staff Sgt. Samuela Pulu, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt.
Staff Sgt. Torry M. Rice, HHC, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt.
Sgt. Aaron F. Krieg, 546th Maint. Co.

Olson awards medals to inductees



Sgt. 1st Class Erika Gordon, 25th MP Co., recites the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer during a presentation at the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club induction ceremony.

Story and photos by
Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — The Bagram Airfield chapter of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club inducted ten new members at Bagram Airfield on Feb. 16.

Run by members of the 25th Infantry Division (Light), membership was open to any Army sergeant through sergeant first class on Bagram Airfield.

The ceremony included presentations featuring the Soldier's Request and the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer. The new inductees also recited the biography of Audie Murphy, including his storied and decorated Army career, his battlefield commission, and his career as an actor and songwriter.

On hand to present each inductee with their Sergeant Audie Murphy Club induction medal was Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, Combined Joint Task Force-76 commander.

In remarks before the official presentation, Olson said Afghanistan is the perfect place to recognize the achievements of NCOs like the SAMC members.

"This operation is built around small units," said Olson. "And critical to the success and performance of

every small unit is the non-commissioned officer. Noncommissioned officers are essential to taking care of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines in Operation Enduring Freedom."

During the induction, each of the NCOs had one of their Soldiers give a brief synopsis



of why they feel their leader is deserving of such an honor.

Making the presentation for Staff Sgt. Marc Jones, 58th Military Police Company, was Spc. Daniel Merriweather.

Seeing his NCO inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club made Merriweather feel good, he said.

"I already knew that he was a great leader, but I'm proud of him because I knew how much this meant to

him," said Merriweather. "He worked very hard and showed me that nothing is too hard in the Army to accomplish."

For all of the inductees, admission into the club involved a series of boards, with some inductees competing at battalion and brigade levels just to get a chance at the Sergeant Audie Murphy board.

But using the term "board" doesn't entirely describe what occurs for induction into SAMC, said Sgt. 1st Class Brian Mincey, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CJTF-76.

"The boards are totally different (compared to) what happens at a traditional promotion board," said Mincey.

He said the boards are conducted round-robin style, subjecting participants to rapid-fire stations that test an NCO's technical and tactical expertise in a variety of areas. Sometimes lasting up to four hours, the boards are some of the most difficult in the Army.

One of the most challenging portions of selection is the fact that each individual must be selected on his merit and the club never mandates a quota for a board, said Mincey.

"During our last board, we only selected 5 out of 17 individuals," he said.

For Jones, induction meant going to the SAMC board four times — two at Fort Lewis and two at Bagram.

The challenge for him was finding the time to study.

As a squad leader in an MP company that consistently patrols and responds to calls, studying meant missing more than a few hours of sleep, he said.

"It was a lot of work," he said. "But I was never going to stop trying. Getting in has meant a lot to me."

Following the induction, the Bagram SAMC made a special presentation to Olson, making him an honorary inductee into the club.

Army Emergency Relief sets 2005 campaign goal of \$240K

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

The 2005 Army Emergency Relief campaign began with a kick-off rally for key leaders and unit project officers at the Nehelani Convention Center on March 11. The rally's purpose was to explain to leaders their role in helping the campaign meet its goal of \$240,000.

"(AER) is not a charity and not a club you join. AER is going to put money into the hands of Soldiers and families when they need it the most," said keynote speaker, Brig. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, 25th Infantry Division (Light), and U.S. Army, Hawaii assistant division commander for support.

He challenged key personnel and project officers to

strive for 100 percent solicitation of their units and educate the Soldiers about AER and its services.

"It's going to be tough to get 100 percent solicitation with units still deployed, but we need it now more than ever," he said, adding, "For the next 30 days, nothing is more important than your efforts ... plain and simple."

Testimonials provided by AER recipients helped underscore the importance of the campaign.

"I can't even begin to tell you how many Soldiers I've seen helped by AER in the past 27 years," began newly retired Sgt. Maj. William Barchers. He described instances where AER had helped others, and then himself.

Up until a divorce a year

"This is not a charity and not a club you join. AER is going to put money into the hands of Soldiers and families when they need it the most"

- Brig. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby

and a half ago, Barchers said he enjoyed a "successful military career and equally successful financial endeavors." The divorce left him financially devastated and AER provided him with a loan to meet his rent and utility needs.

"So, who can it (financial hardships) happen to?" He asked. Answering his own question, Barchers said, "If it can happen to a very successful, sergeant major in the United States Army ... it can happen to anybody."

1st Lt. Terry Burke,

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th ID (L) project officer, commented on the importance of key personnel to the campaign's success.

"They are on the front lines," said Burke, adding, "It is their responsibility to encourage Soldiers to give and let them know of the opportunity to help each other out."

"Helping the Army take care of its own," AER's theme, means exactly that. Funds donated by active and retired Soldiers directly benefit Soldiers requesting assistance.

"Soldiers should give for many reasons. Obviously, there is a chance they might need to use AER personally, but really, it is an opportunity to take care of your buddy.

We take care of our own,"

Burke said. Since 1942, AER has provided more than \$905 million dollars of assistance to 2.9 million Soldiers and their families. Last year in Hawaii, Soldiers and families received more than \$365,000 in AER loans and grants.

Jacoby concluded the event saying, "AER is the quintessential team effort, and it's important now more than ever that we take care of each other."

This year's campaign runs from March 11 to April 14.

(Editor's Note: For AER assistance, contact ACS at 655-2400. For information on the annual AER campaign, contact 1st Lt. Walter at 655-2383 or via email at aercampaign@schofield.army.mil.)

Don't let prom put you in the poor house

High school seniors can budget and save

Take Charge America
Release

For parents with teenagers in high school, monthly bills and expenses may include your son's cellular phone bill, your daughter's extra-curricular sports fees or even gasoline bills accumulated by the entire family.

Adding to the growing pile of bills, parents of high school seniors may find themselves at the mercy of additional expenses incurred from special events, such as senior prom, graduation and more. As parents, we want our children to have fun-filled and memorable senior years without breaking our wallets. Impossible? Not necessarily – parents can work with their teenagers to ensure fun times while actually teaching a few valuable lessons in personal financial management.

Spending by teenagers is an area of great concern to financial experts. In 2003, teenagers spent a whopping \$175 billion, according to Teenage Research Unlimited. While this includes earned money, allowance, gifts and other spending money from their parents, it does not take into account the amount that parents spent as a result of their teenagers' influences.

"Teenage spending at this

level can be extremely harmful, especially with the escalation of credit card debt in the United States," said Mike Sullivan, director of education for Take Charge America.

"As the end of the 2004-2005 school year draws near, it is crucial for parents and their teenagers to talk about finances and create budgets for end-of-the-year activities. Parents with seniors need to be especially cautious because spending can easily get out of hand."

Seniors and their parents should pay special attention to prom expenses which can include tickets, flowers, formal wear, dinner and even special transportation. Instead of ignoring financial issues, parents should meet with their teens before students make commitments, to set the guidelines that are acceptable.

By establishing realistic budgets, agreeable to both parents and teens, teens can participate in the process and learn valuable personal finance skills to prepare them for the future. Parents and their teens should then create an itemized list of necessary items and the price of each to make sure that they stay within the limits of their predetermined budget. Remember, even the little costs can add up!

Mike Sullivan, director of Take Charge America, said that with early planning and budgeting, parents can save money and seniors can still have a great prom night with their friends and classmates. He offers the following tips and ideas for parents and their teens to reduce the cost of senior prom:

• **Transportation** – If you must rent a limousine and a driver, plan ahead and share the ride and cost with two or three other couples. Or better yet, simply borrow a friend's or parent's car to drive yourself and your date, paying only for the gasoline.

• **Flowers** – Purchase flowers at a local grocery store or drug store instead of a flower shop to save. Or purchase single-stemmed flowers and make your own corsage or boutonniere. Silk flowers can be purchased at craft stores and can be put together ahead of time. They can easily be coordinated with your attire and also make great souvenirs.

• **Dinner** – Dinner may be included in the price of the prom ticket for some schools. However, in most cases, the dance begins at around 8 p.m. and students make reservations for dinner before they arrive at the prom. While this can be extremely expensive, dinner does not have to be at a gourmet restaurant. Call nearby restaurants to see where you can get the best deals and make reservations ahead of time.

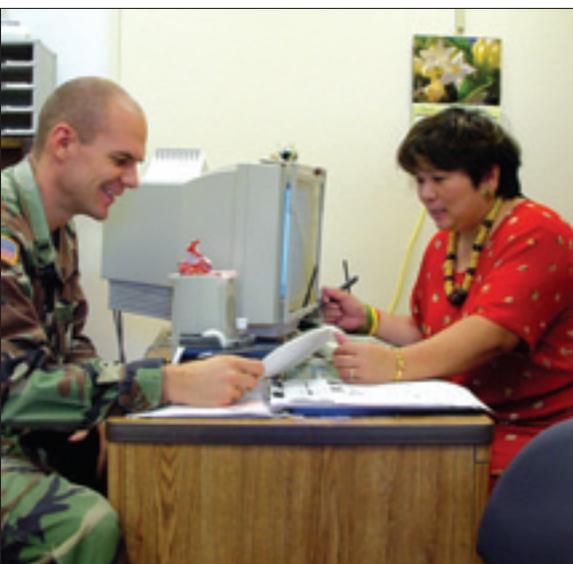
• **Dresses** – Shop at outlet stores or on the Internet for a dress. Even if the dress is a size too big, it can easily be tailored to fit. Just remember, if you find a dress on the Internet, make sure you know the company's return policies before making the purchase. Or purchase your own fabric and have a dressmaker create a personal design for you.

• **Tuxedos** – Rent a tux for the night. Or better yet, borrow one from your older brother or a friend. Purchase the tux only if you're going to use it again, and in the very near future! Some students shop at vintage stores for a different look.

• **Hair and makeup** – Have your mom or an aunt apply your makeup and put up your hair. Do a practice-run first to decide exactly what you want. Similarly, some girls choose to have department store cosmetologists apply their makeup on the day of the prom – and best of all, it's free!

• **Photos** – Bring your own camera to the prom instead of purchasing photograph packages through your school. Candid photographs can be taken to discount or drug stores for mass-printing and enlargements at reasonable cost. In many cases, you can crop photos, remove red-eye, change the color of the photo to black and white or sepia, or add captions and borders for no additional cost.

"Many seniors may feel pressured by their peers to spend a fortune on the latest trends and extravagant restaurants, expecting their parents to foot the bills," said Sullivan. "Do the research, create a practical budget and stick to it. While the prom may last a night, teaching your teens how to manage their money will provide a lifetime lesson," Sullivan said.



Courtesy photo

Pam Hirota assists 1st Lt. John Carver with his out-processing paperwork and the use of the CHRRS referral Web site. Carver will be returning to Hawaii and can use the CHRRS Web site to look for potential rentals before his PCS.

Hirota named PHMA housing/billeting employee of the year

By Kelli Wilson
Directorate of Public Works

This year at the Professional Housing Managers Association, or PHMA, conference, held in Denver, Colo., in January, Pam Hirota was awarded the PHMA Housing/Billeting Employee of the Year. Pam's commitment to her work and expertise was recognized by her Housing Management peers around the world (Army-wide).

When privatization came to Hawaii this year, Pam's job now affected Soldier's off and on-post. During the Basic Housing Allowance

Team visit Pam presented each member with binders complete with current home listings, maps, and local utility information. These allowed members to compare the housing market information on each island as well as to mainland housing markets.

Due to Pam's hard work and dedication the 21.6 percent BAH increase in Hawaii will have a profound effect for years to come. Her expertise with the housing market painted a realistic picture of housing in Hawaii; improving the quality of life for Soldiers and their families.

Commo Soldiers provide clear signal for operations

Story and photo by
Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan - Without communication on the battlefield, there would be chaos. Without signal Soldiers and their equipment in forward locations, there would be no medical evacuations or calls for fire from troops in contact.

At the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team in central Afghanistan, two Soldiers ensure all the equipment remains operational, providing essential communications abilities. The Soldiers provide 24-hour-a-day maintenance on the many different communications systems used at this remote location.

"There are numerous PRT sites and (forward operating bases)," said Staff Sgt. John Summers, Company C, 125th Signal Battalion. "We provide commanders with the ability to talk with the other commanders in the area so they have a clear picture of what is going on throughout the region."

There are several forms of communications available to commanders.

"Our work allows them the means of voice, Internet and data communications," said Spc. Rob Johnson, Co. C, 125th Sig. Bn.

Having the proper communications plan is vital to the mission in many ways.

"When you need to call for fire or call for a MEDEVAC, you will use the systems we put in place," he said. "Requesting supplies, support or transportation couldn't be done without

communications."

Communications are key to the success of any mission.

"I tell my Soldiers that they have two best friends out here," said Sgt. John Stange, Task Force 168, operations noncommissioned officer. "The guy next to you and your communications. Without those two things, you couldn't survive."

Bottom line - communications saves lives.

"It allows all the commanders to be on the same sheet of music," said Summers.

"It's a good thing they do a good job," said Stange. "The lives of the team and your platoon members depend on good communications."

Setting up the equipment when they arrived at the remote location was a huge task, but nothing these signal Soldiers couldn't handle.

"We had communications within 36 minutes of when we arrived at Ghazni," said Summers. "The commander was able to contact his superiors within an hour of our arrival."

The speed at which the communications Soldiers work impresses those they support.

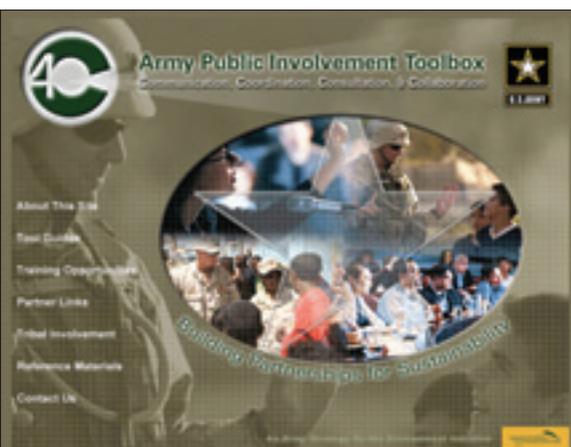
"The communications guys are doing a great job," said Stange. "They make the mission run smoothly."

With operations occurring throughout the country, communications proves to be one of the most important jobs in Operation Enduring Freedom.

"No one else could do their job if they weren't able to talk to each other," said Johnson.

Spc. Rob Johnson, Co. C, 125th Sig. Bn., disassembles the panels of a satellite at the Ghazni PRT before moving it to another location. With the satellite in a new location, the PRT will be able to receive a better signal.





Army launches Web site for 'community partnerships'

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Army has launched a new Web site to help strengthen partnerships between the Army and the communities around installations and ranges.

The Army Public Involvement Toolbox seeks to help meet the goals of the new Army Strategy for the Environment announced in October 2004, officials said.

The Web site was developed by a consortium of Army organizations to provide tools, methods, examples, and information related to public involvement.

The strategy highlights the necessity of involving the public if the Army is to meet its goals and achieve sustainability in the future, officials said. They said the site, like the strategy, places emphasis on the full range of activities needed to engage stakeholders with the "4Cs" of communication, coordination, consultation, and collaboration.

Viewers can access the site at www.asaie.army.mil/pitoolbox.

"As the Army Strategy for the Environment states, 'the sustainable futures of our installations and our communities are inextricably connected,'" said Geoffrey Prosch, acting assistant secretary of the Army for Installations and Environment. "This new strategy mandates that the Army change how it communicates, moving beyond simply informing others of our activities, to actively collaborating with the public to forge mutually beneficial solutions regarding the limited resources we all share."

The primary purpose of the Web site is to provide Soldiers, Army civilian staff, and Army contractors engaged in public involvement with functional, proven techniques and information, according to the Army Environmental Policy Institute.

The site is publicly accessible to reinforce the Army's commitment to public involvement, as well as to share information across other government agencies engaged in these type of activities, institute officials said.

"This is an initiative that intends to foster collaboration, and it has truly been a collaborative effort from the start," said Karen Baker, senior fellow for strategic policy at the Army Environmental Policy Institute.

Baker pulled together the Army Public Involvement Committee, a team of Army organizations engaged in public involvement. The committee sought to build upon recommendations from an Army senior leadership panel which had identified the need for more "how to" resources in engaging the public on environmental issues.

As the committee assembled material and developed content for the Web site, it consulted with other federal agencies, such as the

Environmental Protection Agency, state agencies, and several non-governmental organizations.

"The most exciting thing about this project was the enthusiastic feedback from all of the partner organizations," said Baker. "Every time we met, more people came to the table, and every time we showed the test site to a group, we were provided with more resources and ideas."

"From the beginning, we made a conscious effort to avoid reinventing the wheel," Baker said, noting that a great deal of excellent information on best practices developed by the Army, and by other organizations already existed. The challenge was making it easier for Army personnel to find information so they can develop plans and programs that meet their local needs and issues.

The project team selected content for the Web site with an emphasis on providing practical, hands-on information and organizing the information into functional 'buttons' for easy, quick linking to the information.

Viewers can quickly access guides on specific public involvement activities, locate training opportunities, find the latest regulations and policy statements on public involvement and link to other resources created by other agencies.

The site is designed for frequent updates, Baker said, with viewers providing suggestions for future Web postings through an e-mail feedback feature.

"The project team combined the excellent work already done by many Army organizations to create a "one-stop shop" for all Army practitioners, that extends far beyond the environmental arena. The techniques and material can be applied to any issue in which the Army would need to actively engage with the public," said Col. Richard Breen, director of Community Relations & Outreach for Army Public Affairs.

Launching the Army Public Involvement Toolbox is only the first initiative for the Army Public Involvement Committee, officials said. The group also is creating pilot public involvement training courses and making recommendations on how to incorporate public involvement practices into Army policy.

"The tool box is a great start to raising awareness and providing resources to the field, but it is only our first step in making the '4C' concept a reality," said Ray Fatz, deputy assistant secretary of the Army (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health).

"We have much work to do to ensure that involving the public becomes part of how the Army does business."

(Editor's note: Information provided by the Army Environmental Policy Institute.)

Nutrition + Produce = Healthy Choice

By Adam Austin
Defense Commissary Agency

FORT LEE, Va. – With March being National Nutrition Month, the commissary's produce department is the place to head in making a healthy choice.

There's good news to report, according to Carroll Allred, produce category manager for the Defense Commissary Agency. Prices are back to normal after the hurricanes that devastated Florida and its tomato crop last fall. The banana and lettuce crops, hammered by bad weather in places like Costa Rica and California, are making a comeback with prices returning to normal. Prices for bagged salads



were not affected.

"I encourage our commissary shoppers to take a look at the produce, the quality of product, and take advantage of the savings of 30 percent or

more," said Patrick B. Nixon, chief operating officer and acting director for DeCA.

Commissaries are focusing on nutrition and healthy choices this year in line with a greater DoD emphasis on weight management for the military.

"We want to be the nutritional leader for military families by emphasizing that commissaries are the place to shop for fresh, healthy foods whether it's March or October," said Nixon. "We're saying 'It's your choice, make it healthy' when you shop in the commissary."

The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of nearly 275 commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees

and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones.

Shoppers save an average of 30 percent or more on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$2,700 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.



Staff Sgt. Carvel Gay

Sgt. Jorge De Leon, 25th Inf. Div. (Light) waits at the starting line before the L.A. Marathon March 6. De Leon participated in the hand-crank wheelchair division and finished in 3 hours and 2 minutes.

Schofield Soldier won't let missing leg stop him from going the distance

By WO1 Marc Yablonka
40th ID Support Brigade,
CASMR Public Affairs

LOS ANGELES – Sgt. Jorge De Leon was all pumped up the night before the L.A. Marathon March 6. After all, who wouldn't be when there was the chance to prove that he could complete the 26.2 mile race that weaves through the streets of downtown Los Angeles?

But for Sgt. Jorge De Leon, of the 25th Infantry Division, the marathon meant even more. He would be competing in the hand crank wheelchair division because an anti-tank mine took off his right leg just outside of his unit's base camp in Afghanistan last May when the humvee he was driving ran over it.

"They planted a remotely detonated mine about 200 meters outside the gate to our camp 10 minutes before we got there. I was driving, then suddenly everything turned black. I don't even recall the explosion," De Leon said.

Eleven surgeries later, De Leon remains resolute about his connection to the Army, one Soldier does not want to relinquish. In fact, while he is performing rear echelon work now, his strongest desire is to rejoin his unit in Afghanistan, following in the footsteps of Capt. David Rozelle, the first amputee to return to active command in Iraq.

"I don't like working behind a desk," he light-heartedly complained.

Doctors will re-evaluate De Leon's situation whenever his medical boards occur, De Leon said, and determine whether he

will be able to get out from behind that desk.

"The Soldiers who have been allowed to go back were amputated below the knee. Mine was amputated above."

He remains hopeful that doctors will approve of his either joining CID (Criminal Investigations Division), being able to use his police background as an MP, or perhaps working in Military Intelligence.

"The Iraqis and Afghans need our help. If the situation there calls for war or not, I don't know and I don't care," he said. "They sent us over there and we will help them. I've seen how everything is there. I've seen the changes. I did my job and that's never going to change for me," he added.

In spite of his incredibly positive attitude, De Leon's rehabilitation has been difficult at times.

"It's not easy after 31 years to learn how to walk again. Or having my wife and my family do everything for me after I did everything for 31 years," he said.

Part of De Leon's rehab process has also included his left leg, since his tibia broke in the mishap and he now wears a rod and four pins from his knee to his ankle in that leg.

"Everything's a challenge," he told the Los Angeles Daily News. "I had to learn how to walk again, go to the bathroom, drive, and ride a bicycle, dress."

By all counts De Leon met the challenge head on.

"From the beginning, I was impressed with his demeanor and positive attitude," said Army Lt. Luis Rodriguez, his

nurse on Ward 57, the amputee ward at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Though many amputees undergo months of physical therapy, De Leon was fitted with his prosthesis within a month of being admitted, Lt. Rodriguez recalled.

"Right away he was saying, 'I'm going to start walking. I'm going to get out of here. I'm not surprised to hear that he is doing so well,'" Rodriguez said.

One of the things that has made his journey to wholeness more tolerable is the prosthesis that the Army has paid \$80,000 for. It is computerized and pre-programmed so that De Leon simply straps it on and walks.

The prosthesis is programmed to allow him to ride a regular bike and even drive a car.

It is not on the market yet, but 200 people are currently using it, De Leon said.

What has aided his adjustment even more is the reason he found himself in Los Angeles in early March for the marathon.

Enter Mary Bryant, director of the Achilles Track Club at Walter Reed Hospital. Achilles has helped veterans who have lost limbs by encouraging them to run such races.

Achilles Track Club was actually started by Dick Traum, the first amputee to run a marathon, which he did in New York in 1976.

Bryant met De Leon while he was in rehab at Walter Reed and convinced him to participate in the Hope and Possibility

Run, a five-mile race through New York's Central Park last August, three short months after his amputation.

The Sgt. took fifth place in the hand crank wheelchair division and, thereafter, became hooked.

"It gave me a chance to prove to myself and everybody, my wife and kids, that just because I'm missing a leg, I don't have to suffer. And it's fun," he said.

A well-known rental car company believed in Jorge enough to underwrite his entire trip to Los Angeles in order for him to participate in the marathon. The car rental agency will do likewise for other Soldiers with amputated limbs for what Achilles bills its "National Marathoners' Tour" in five different U.S. cities this year.

Having taken part in the New York run paid off for De Leon in L.A. because he crossed the finish line in 3 hours and 2 minutes.

Bryant and the Achilles Track Club were behind him all the way.

Bryant feels she has had a special calling to her position owing to growing up with a brother who was paralyzed from the neck down as a youth, and having undergone cancer surgery to remove a seven-centimeter tumor in her left chest area in recent years.

"I tease the Soldiers and say, 'I just don't show you what's amputated on me,'" she said.

When De Leon gets home to Hawaii, he will continue rehab

at Tripler Army Medical Center. Yet he knows that, even with the medical attention and the demons he faced in the beginning, his greatest support system has been his own family.

"In the beginning, I felt like a 'thing'. Like a table that could do nothing. Like I wasn't worth anything." But his wife Nydia, their son Jorge, Jr., 3, and 1-year-old Amanda showed him otherwise.

"Nydia has been in the hospital with me since day one through all the surgeries, the treatment ... but my main support was truly my family," he said. And Mary Bryant has been like an extended family member ever since they met at Walter Reed.

"This {marathon} is not my first time with her. If I came back it's because Achilles and she have been amazing. The motivation. Everything."

If Mary hadn't come along, Sgt. De Leon would be sitting back in his room watching TV. He would do his half hour of required physical therapy and just go back to his room, by his own admission to her.

Bryant visits Walter Reed's Ward 57 on a monthly basis. She currently maintains a ros-

ter of around 100 amputees from current military actions whom she has enlisted for distance running events.

Bryant is quick to point out that Soldiers, and their families who wish to accompany them, pay no fees whatsoever for transportation to and from Marathon host cities. The same is true for accommodations during the event.

"We don't look at what our athletes have lost. We look at what the strength that they have is. Everyone can do something if you focus," said Bryant, whose paralyzed brother took part in the New York City Marathon and was the first man without use of his arms or legs to participate in the event.

"Twenty-six miles he had to push his head into the headrest of his wheelchair," she stressed. "Twenty-six miles."

There's an incredible team spirit amongst all the amputees that pulls them all together so it's not like 'woe is me that I've lost a leg,'" Bryant said.

There are emotional hurdles, she admits, but "Once they embrace the fact that they can do it, they just keep going. Once they realize that they can beat the mental hurdle, the body falls right in line."

Army's top chefs cross spatulas in culinary battle

By Timothy L. Hale and
Sgt. Jorge Gomez
Army News Service

FORT LEE, Va. – More than 200 military chefs traded in their body armor for white coats and went spatula to spatula for the 30th Annual U.S. Army Culinary Arts Competition that began March 7 at Fort Lee and runs through today.

Competitions range from preparing four-course meals and sculpting lavish pastries to the Army field cooking event.

A panel of certified judges from the American Culinary Foundation included the executive pastry chef of Caesars Palace in Las Vegas and "Fritz" Sonnenschmidt, chairman of the American Academy of Chefs.

Much like some cooking competitions seen on television today, the Senior Chef Competition included a mystery basket that forced competitors to create menus quickly on their feet.

"It's a skill they should be able to accomplish without too much difficulty," said Chief Warrant Officer David Longstaff, chief of craft skills training branch, U.S. Army Center for Excellence, Subsistence.

Each competitor had 30 minutes to plan a menu followed by four hours of intense chopping, slicing, dicing, blending, and mixing ingredients to prepare a four-course meal for judging. After preparation, the competitors had one hour to serve each of the four courses.

"Proper techniques in the kitchen will determine what follows through in the taste," said Judge Rudy Speckamp, a certified master chef and one of this year's judges. He said that the total package of eye appeal, aroma and taste are integral parts of the overall success of the menu.

Competitors are expected to exhibit a high standard of technical expertise, menu choice and execution of the meal in order to earn the prestigious title of Senior Army Chef of the Year.

This year's competition featured a wide range of expertise as well as varying rank.

The most junior was Pfc. Christopher Zimmerman from Fort Campbell, Ky. But despite his rank, Zimmerman was no stranger to the Army culinary program. A graduate of the Western Culinary Institute, he served two years in the Army Reserve as a food service specialist followed by two years of active duty before leaving the Army.

Zimmerman then worked as a sous chef in Louisiana and the wine country of California. He said he was watching television and saw a program about the Army Culinary Competition and after some thought, contacted a recruiter and re-joined the Army.

On the opposite spectrum of the culinary competition, Soldiers had few utensils and limited ingredients in the field cooking event.

Chefs faced the pressure of preparing 50 meals in cramped space with very little room for error.

Teams of four Soldiers marched into their mobile kitchen trailers and took inventory of equipment. With a mystery basket of ingredients featuring pork chops, the chefs sketched a plan of attack.

Mobile burner units lit up at 8:30 a.m., launching the competition into full-battle cooking.

Two senior food service judges from Fort Lee closely observed the teams throughout the morning. Like hawks, they watched the Soldiers butcher meats, knead dough, sauté onions and maintain sanitation procedures to meet the 11:30 a.m. deadline.

Designed to try the Soldiers in field cookery and teamwork, the event tested how the teams used their equipment, planned, prepared and served their meals. Points were awarded for sanitation, timing, techniques, presentation, nutrition and



Spc. Florine Nevins assists her fellow Team Hawaii member during the Junior Chef of the Year Competition.

Jamie L. Carson

enhancement. Major points were awarded for flavor, taste, texture, temperature and doneness.

Given limited resources, Soldiers tackled the challenge of coming up with a creative way to "sell" their product to the judges, said Chief Warrant

Officer 4 Arnold Montiel, Basic Food Services Training Division chief and judge.

"This experience encourages the Soldiers to maximize the use of all their ingredients to better prepare meals when they are out in the field. It teaches them that there is

always another way to prepare the same menu," Montiel said.

"Anyone can make a pork chop," said Command Sgt. Maj. Clinton Jackson, food service sergeant major at Fort Drum, N.Y.

"Creativity will be a key element in the competition, but

the advantage may go to the teams who have more experience cooking in the field," Jackson said.

Events include a Nutritional Hot Food Challenge, Culinary Demonstrations, Ice Carving Demonstrations, Culinary Knowledge Bowl and a Live

Hot Food and Pastry Competition.

(Editor's note: Amy Clement and Travis Edwards of Fort Lee Public Affairs contributed to this article. Timothy Hale and Sgt. Jorge Gomez also write for the Fort Lee Traveller newspaper.)



Tim Hale

Sgt. Karen Glanzer works with a flaming skillet during the Senior Army Chef of the Year Competition.