HELP AGAINST PTSD • AR-RAP: OUTSTANDING NEW BONUS

THE BRIDGE

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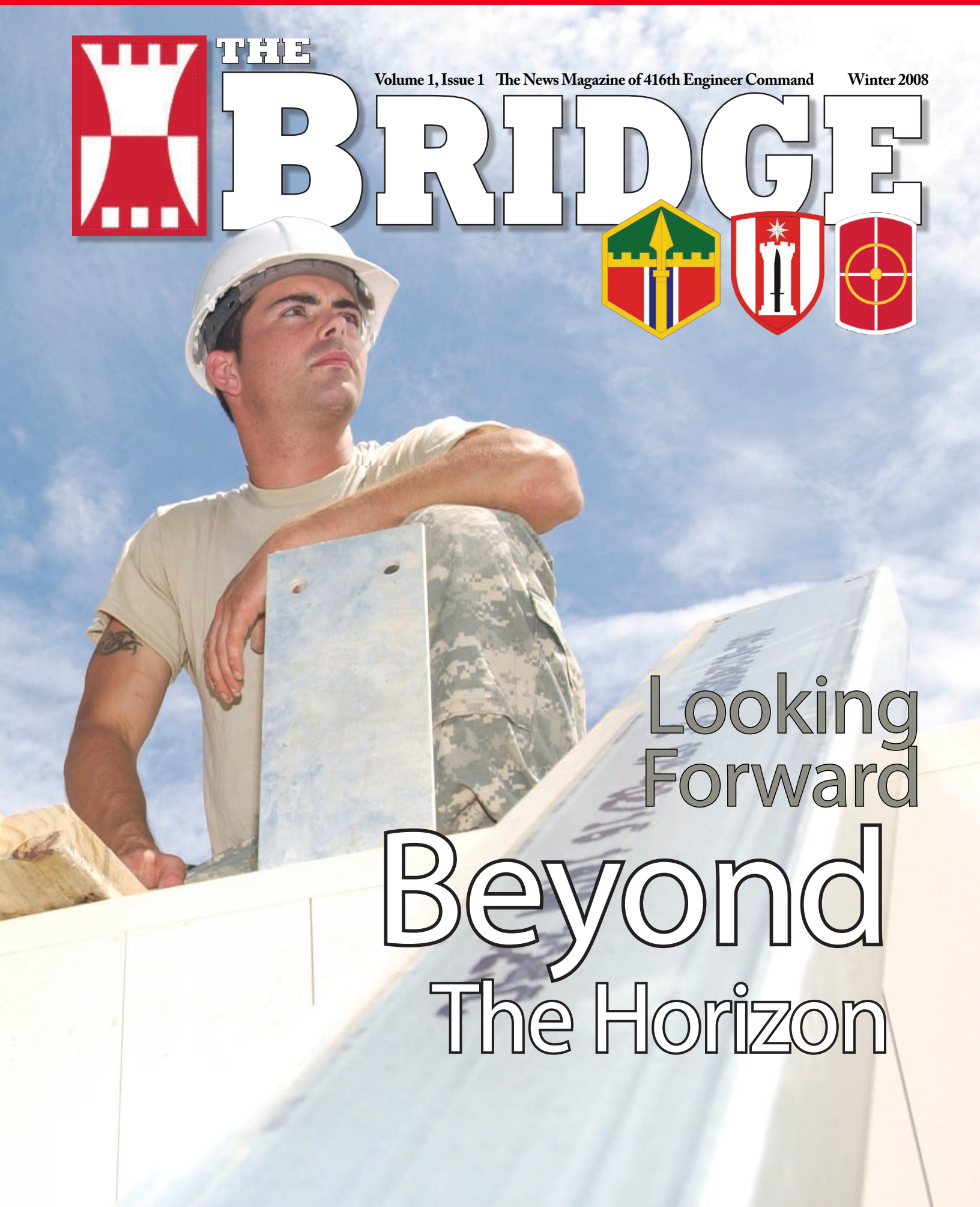

Looking Forward Beyond The Horizon

Leader's Notes

Back to the Basics

Let me start out by saying welcome to all the Soldiers and units that are new to the 416th ENCOM. Over the past 12 months the 416th ENCOM and our new down trace have undergone incredible change. The headquarters transformed into an operational command with the transfer of units in 27 states to 416th command and control. Transformation of legacy structured units to more agile and responsive modular design. All of this while still supporting GWOT and other operational missions.

Modularity has bought a tremendous turbulence to many of our units. Soldiers who were Duty MOS qualified 12 months ago now need to attend training for a new role in their unit. We as a command and we as an operational Army Reserve must meet the training challenges head on. The 416th ENCOM developed an aggressive Duty MOSQ training strategy to rapidly bring our new modular units to the level of readiness necessary to support mission requirements. This plan, along with other transformation requirements, places a heavy load on the leadership at every level.

This is why we must get "Back to the Basics". Noncommissioned Officers at every level are responsible for the individual and team training. Duty MOS and NCOES qualified are critical parts of those training responsibilities. First Line Leaders, NCOs at the squad level, must take charge of getting their Soldiers trained. They are responsible for ensuring their Soldiers are properly scheduled and adequately prepared to successfully complete the training required. First Line Leaders should be tracking their Soldiers progress in Leader Books. That's back to the basics. Platoon Sergeants and Operations Sergeants also have a role of ensuring that the Soldiers in their formations are enrolled in the appropriate training and prepared for success. As do First Sergeants and Command Sergeants Major. We can't be successful in meeting this challenge by directing each Soldier from the top down. It starts at the squad level with the Squad Leader taking responsibility for the training of their Soldiers.

Another basic element necessary for our success is manning the force. The Soldier is the centerpiece of our Army. We may have the best equipment available but it does us no good if we don't have Soldiers in our formations trained and ready to use it. We need every Soldiers help in filling our formations. Every Soldier is a recruiter! I strongly encourage every Soldier to enroll in the Army Reserve Recruiter Assistance Program (AR-RAP) and Operation SMART (Sergeant Major of the Army Recruiting Team). The Army Reserve is a community based and values based organization. We as Army Reserve Soldiers should be our own best recruiters. We just need to share the positive story of the benefits and experiences we enjoy by serving in the Army Reserve.

From CSM LeRoy Haugland
CSM of the 416th ENCOM

THE BRIDGE

Produced for Personnel of 416th Engineer Command

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U.S. ARMY PHOTO

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416th Soldier surveys project during the completion of New Horizons 07.
Photo By Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Duran

USO Gala Salutes Reserve Soldiers

The annual Star-Spangled Gala Event offered an exciting evening of entertainment.

Gary Sinise entertains the crowd with the Lt. Dan Band at the Navy Pier Grand Ballroom

PHOTO BY SPC CAROLYN KETTELHUT

CHICAGO, Ill.-The Star Spangled Salute Gala was held in the Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier. It is a spectacular fundraiser. Thirty percent of USO's annual budget comes from this annual event. There were more then 800 people here this year for the celebration. As much as ninety cents of every dollar donated to USO is used in programs to support deployed Soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and their Families.

To start off this year's celebration, the 85th Division Band from Arlington Heights, Ill. performed for an eager audience. This is a wonderful event, and it's great that so many people in Chicago could be here tonight, said Col. (P) Marcia Anderson. Anderson is the commander of the 85th Division Band. She mentioned that most of the members of the band are college students. "We are one of the most active bands in the country", she said as she spoke about the change of command they performed in Fort Carson, Colo.

Sgt. 1st Class Sammy L. Davis was an honored guest at the gala. He won the Congressional Medal of Honor for courageous action in Vietnam.

The Congressional Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action against enemy forces which can be given to a member of the United States Armed Forces. Davis then sang a couple of duets with Alison Ruble, one of which was an excellent rendition of "Sweet Home Chicago."

Ruble is the entertainment and community director for the USO.

"I was singing in a club in Chicago," she mentioned, the Pump Room. "I was approached by a USO supporter and Board Member who asked if I would be interested in performing in a USO show that was part of that year's Gala. I did the performance, and the rest is history, as they say."

It was a chance meeting-- but one she was so grateful for."

"As a musician, I've worn many hats and performed for a wide variety of audiences and occasions. However, I find my work with the USO some of the most fulfilling I've ever done. It's an honor to present music and entertainment to our Troops and their families, as well as represent the USO in civic or non-military events."

Morale support is one of the cornerstone's to the USO's mission historically, and being a part of that makes me incredibly proud."

Bob Woodruff, who was the co-anchor of ABC's World News Tonight, and Doug Vogt, who is a three time Emmy Award winning cameraman, won the USO Heart of a Patriot Award for their dedication to excellence in journalism, and their support of the troops.

For more information about USO and their programs for troops and their families, visit www.uso.org.

From The Commander

Maj. Gen Michael R. Eyre
Commanding General

ALL THE BEST FOR 2008
...SAFETY ALWAYS

Chaplain's Corner

PLAN TO SUCCEED
by Col. Timothy M. Samorajski

I'm sometimes asked, "Will I like the plans God has for me?" The answer is an overwhelming yes. God has not called any of us to a life of misery or defeat. His plans are *awesome* and always overflowing with blessings and hope. Consider how this was made real to a tax-collector called Matthew.

Matthew 9: 9-13:

9: And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose and followed Him.

10: And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

11: And when the Pharisees saw this they said to His disciples, "Why is your teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?"

12: But when He heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

13. But go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

As we read this passage from the New Testament, our minds are drawn to three key points.

A DAY OUT OF THE ORDINARY. Matthew's day seemed very ordinary when it began, just another day at the office. And yet, God was at work. It would be a day when he'd personally encounter the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! When we realize that God is always at work in us and around us, we come to understand that their's no such thing as an ordinary day. Each and every one is a gift from God and shows that He never abandons His plans for our lives.

A RELATIONSHIP THAT'S NOT ORDINARY.

In our society, superficial relationships are the flavor of the day. We don't want people to get to close. Not so with God. In verse ten we read that after calling Matthew, Jesus went to his house and shared a meal. God desires to relate to us in an intimate manner. In John 15:15 we read, "No longer do I call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you *friends*…

LOVE THAT'S EXTRAORDINARY.

As we take a moment to reflect on our lives, let's consider verse 12. If we've made mistakes in our life, have hurt others, have sin that needs to be dealt with, our Great Physician stands ready to bring healing. While sin always leads on quite painful detours, if we'll allow the Lord to work, He will bring restoration.

Matthew also had a decision to make. When Jesus called to Him, he had to decide whether to follow or turn his back. In reality, we all have to make that same choice. May the admonition of Psamls 95:7 speak to us. "Today when you hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

What's Beyond the Horizon?

by Sgt Edwin Rodriguez

A year ago Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers setup a camp on the northern coast of Panama. They brought their equipment, hard-working attitude and plenty of smiling faces. It was a joint force humanitarian effort to provide resources not available previously to Panamanian locals. Dentist cleaned teeth, vets mended wounded cows and engineers finished school building. The task force provided some relief to the area, leaving behind happiness however they also left wonder. For soldiers it was another mission complete, but for the local population, it was "What do we do now?"

This scenario has taken place in the likes of Panama, Honduras, and El Salvador where missions complete led to some dependence on those people to maintain their own stability.

That was then and Beyond the Horizons is now; here to show that we have not forgotten about them.

Beyond the Horizon 2008 is the upcoming Southern Command missions' new name for a new focus. The mission is to begin 29 March and last until 7 June, said Assistant Planner for the 416th Engineer Command Captain Shawn J. Hubbell. All the generous benefits by all those that have participated in these missions are still there.

Those benefits are quality health-care, sturdy building structures for those countries involved and great hands-on training for those troops working in country

However, with a new name comes a new focus

BH 2008 adds two more elements to the original operation, Hubbell said.

"First, sending out teams to conduct planning for those future mission next year"

"Second phase is conducting current years missions on the ground in our partner nation countries."

"The third phase is were are going to reach back to last years countries that we conducted humanitarian civic assistance projects in and go back there and conduct repairs maintenance and upgrades of those previous years projects," Hubbell explained.

That first step of planning is normally done, if possible, 8 months before the operation said Hubbell. For this operation engineers will go into country and survey the area during Beyond the Horizon.

"What they will be doing is in Ecuador, Guyana, El Salvador, and Dominican Republic and they will be going there and identifying which towns or villages require humanitarian civic assistance projects... its purely planning," Hubbell added.

The second third of the operation is the yearly mission by SOUTHCOM, based out of Miami, FL, that is carried out in Central America and the Caribbean. In March they will travel to Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname. The 416th ENCOM is helping coordinate all the units, missions and security of soldier for the Honduras mission. It will be a group effort lead by individuals chosen to be part of the Partnership of Americas Engagement Team.

"That is essentially the brigade level command and control element that is going to be running the operation... that's going to be headed up by a Colonel," said Hubbell, the Nebraskan native.

The 416th is now in the process of finding of an intelligent, highly experienced Colonel and duration staff. Based from Soto Cano Air Force Base, the 416th will help operate medical, dental, veterinarian, school and community center structures through out the country. More then 30 units will participate in Soto Cano added Sgt. 1st Class Christopher J. Clark of the 416th Engineer Section. He along with many others say that this is an excellent chance for everyone.

"It will be a very good training opportunity. To see another part of the world and getting better opportunities for locals is the goal," Clark added.

The final phase is important because those Panamanians will get to remember us once again. For this mission Army engineers again will go back to last year's countries, Panama, Guatemala and Belize and make any repairs needed in those same structures that brought hope last year. Any new improvements and upgrades will be made after planning and surveying the past areas for

construction, said Clark, a native of Glens Falls, NY.

The countries for the first part of the operation will be in Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana and the Dominican Republic, making it a total of 11 countries. A huge reason for this is to spread assistance to more areas at one time, hence "beyond" the original horizon.

"We want to go beyond the current year's mission. We really want to get out and affect as much as Central America and the Caribbean as much as we can," said Hubbell.

This operation will last for three years and the success and failure will hinge on its first year. The planning going into it is very extensive but many at the 416th are confident they will succeed if not more then previous missions. Hubbell explains the toughest part.

"The scope and depth of this mission has grown compared to the New Horizons mission. The concept of Beyond the Horizons; is an enormous operational and logistical effort and

that's going to be the biggest challenge providing the logistical support to all aspects of this mission."

Even though the mission has expanded, the most important elements are those Soldiers who give there full effort to those people in Central America and the Caribbean where the care is needed. The scope is larger then just training, added Hubbell.

For some Panamanians faces will change but the uniforms and the effort will be the same. The gratitude will be great for those people in countries like Guyana or Ecuador where Soldiers will begin the process early or in the case of Honduras and the 416th brand new. It might be even more gratifying seeing soldiers reach back for those with needs and in many cases continuously in need. The on going effort to help these will never be in vein and hopefully they will never again wonder, "What do we do now?"

Family First, Safety Always

U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

FORT RUCKER, Ala. (Dec. 4, 2007) – Army officials are empowering Family members to take an active role in implementing safety practices to protect their Families and loved ones returning home from deployments.

The Army recognizes that Army Families are a highly powerful group, capable of positively influencing how Soldiers and Family members think. The Army's new Family Engagement Kit raises Families' awareness of the leading indicators in accidents while passing along the "what" and "how" of best practices. Armed with these newly created tools, Family members are afforded active involvement in their Soldiers' safety.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center study of accident and associated statistics, indicates when Soldiers return from a deployment or controlled environment, the rigors and oversight provided by leaders is diminished. Between fiscal years 2002 and 2007, 186 Soldiers died within one year of returning from deployments. Approximately 30 percent of the deaths occurred within the first 30 days of post deployment and 63 percent within the first six months. Of the 186 fatalities, 145 involved privately owned vehicles during off-duty hours.

Army safety officials are convinced that oversight, control and structure are beneficial to achieve an accident-free environment. The USACRC's collective challenge is to formulate tools that target safety and risk management as

a "way of life" for application when Soldiers are off duty. "As leaders, we know that direct engagement with our Soldiers makes a positive difference in their safety," said Brig. Gen. Bill Forrester, director of Army safety and commanding general of the USACRC. "No one knows Soldiers better than their families and there are few organizations better positioned than Families to influence Soldiers to make safer choices and take fewer risks."

Forrester added that the USACRC believes it is extremely difficult to look a spouse or child in the eye and tell them you are not going to wear your helmet or a seat belt because you don't care enough to stay alive for them. "The Family Engagement Kit features tools that Family members can use to engage their loved ones in best safety practices in order to help protect them," said Forrester. "Many take very little time or effort, and the payoff is huge."

In all, the kit includes six tools for post-deployment best practices. One such tool is the Travel Risk Planning System, better known as TRiPS. The aim of TRiPS is to reduce the risk of accidents when traveling by POV, the No. 1 killer of Soldiers. Another potentially life-saving tool included in the kit is the Motorcycle/ATV Agreement. This tool encourages Families and their Soldiers to discuss the hazards and safety measures associated with riding motorcycles or all-terrain vehicles. These web-based tools are self-explanatory, self-supporting with Power Point briefs containing associated talking points.

The Army's goal is to put these tools into the hands and empower Army Family Team Building trainers, Family Readiness Group leaders, brigade-level safety professionals, BOSS leaders, parents, and individual Family members to keep our Army team safe, Forrester added. Families are encouraged to embrace the Family Engagement Kit as another tool supporting one common desire – safer Soldiers and Families. "Family involvement is essential, so I ask for engagement with your loved one," Forrester said. "With your help, we can better protect our Nation's most precious assets – our Soldiers."

For more information about the Family Engagement Kit, visit the USACRC Web site at https://crc.army.mil/family-engagement/.

Prepared by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center in Ft. Rucker, Ala.

Keeping The Family Ready

Your Care is TRICARE

TRICARE Management Activity wants to reassure its beneficiaries that none of them are at risk of losing their TRICARE coverage, regardless of the cost of their care or other conditions that might affect commercial insurance policies. "I want to remind our beneficiaries that TRICARE is an entitlement earned by Military service," said Army Major General Elder Granger, Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity. "They shouldn't worry as their entitlement to care is statutory. No contractor can simply drop the health care coverage of our beneficiaries."

Beneficiaries may have seen recent news reports alleging that health insurance company Health Net Inc., rewarded its senior analyst in charge of cancellations for exceeding annual targets for revoking policies. Because Health Net Federal Services is one of TRICARE's managed care contractors, TRICARE beneficiaries might think they are also at risk of cancellation or revocation of their TRICARE coverage. TRICARE leaders say that is simply not true. Health Net Inc., has many divisions. The issue in the news report involves the civilian commercial health insurance portion of Health Net Inc., and is not related to the Federal Services part of the company.

Unlike some commercial insurance policies, TRICARE benefits are not limited by such things as pre-existing conditions or failure to report health information. If a person is entitled to care under the laws established by Congress, then they receive that care.

"In addition to the best available medical care, we want TRICARE to offer one other benefit," Major General Granger said. "Peace of mind."

Harvard Can Pay Your Tuition

Harvard University announced over the weekend that from now on undergraduate students from low-income families will pay no tuition. In making the announcement, Harvard's president Lawrence H. Summers said, 'When only 10 percent of the students in Elite higher education come from families in lower half of the income distribution, we are not doing enough. We are not doing enough in bringing elite higher education to the lower half of the income distribution.'

If you know of a family earning less than $60,000 a year with an honor student graduating from high school soon, Harvard University wants to pay the tuition.

To find out more about Harvard offering free tuition for families making less than $60,000 a year visit Harvard's financial aid website at: http://www.fao.fas.harvard.edu/_or call the school's financial aid office at (617) 495-1581.

America Supports Soldiers With PTSD

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23, 2007 - A group that supports wounded service members and their families is offering troops a friendly ear with its newest program, "Hear 4 You."

The program aims to develop a network of volunteers to listen to military personnel and their families affected by post-deployment stress and post-traumatic stress disorder. The program is one of many services offered by Silver Star Families of America, which supports families of wounded Soldiers. The group is a supporter of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and corporations with military personnel and their families serving at home and abroad.

"We are just there to listen," Janie Orman, Silver Star Families of America's vice president, said. "We are not counseling. We want everyone to know that. We don't take the place of a (mental health) professional in any way."

Thirteen Silver Star Families of America volunteers man e-mail or instant-messaging accounts to answer concerns of Soldiers. Military personnel or family members wishing talk to a volunteer through the Hear 4 You program can follow the link from the Silver Star Families of America Web site, www.silverstarfamilies.org. All volunteers have received training in how to spot signs of post-traumatic stress disorder or suicidal thoughts, Orman said.

"In that particular area, if we feel or get a sense of that in any way, we advise them ... to seek help," she said. "If needed, we'll try to help them find that right then."

The Hear 4 You program took root when the Silver Star Families of America members realized how many e-mails they were receiving from Soldiers or family members wanting to talk. This concerned the members, Orman said.

The program is especially important to several Silver Star Families of America members who have sons suffering from PTSD.

"They're trying to encourage their own kids to at least talk," Orman said. "They feel like if (Soldiers) can just talk some of this out, it may help them in some way."

The organization is hoping the program's base in anonymity will encourage Soldiers to open up without fear of retribution.

"We've been told ... that a lot of them feel like it's easier to talk to someone they don't know," she said. "I know there's a Department of Defense hotline and a (Veterans Affairs) hotline, but sometimes they feel like they might face repercussions (if they go through formal channels).

"We would love to see it really grow and ... make some type of difference," she added.

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

PHOTO BY SGT 1ST CLASS SCOTT TURNER

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

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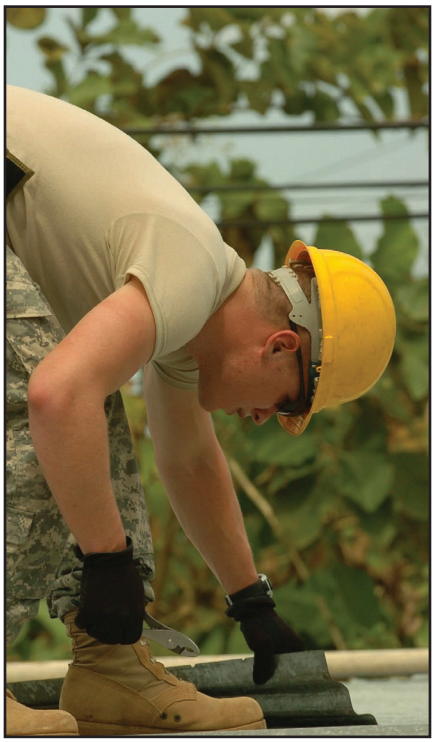

PHOTO BY SGT 1ST CLASS SCOTT TURNER

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Soldiers from the 961st Engineer Battalion lay concrete for the foundation of a medical clinic near the tiny village of Higueron. The clinic will bring aid to the villagers who would have had to travel several miles for basic healthcare.

Engineers Pour It On

961st from Wisconsin builds foundations

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

New Horizons 2007 was in Panama to help build a foundation of trust and friendship between the United States and Panama.

The local population and government were eager to work with the Soldiers, sailors and airmen in the National Guard and Reserve, who have taken up shovels or medical equipment to help build up and improve the quality of life for many local Panamanians who lack some basic needs.

Some members of the New Horizons force built that foundation, figuratively and literally.

Led by the 961st Engineering Battalion from Wisconsin, concrete was poured for a medical clinic in the tiny village of Higueron, an area where locals would have normally travelled miles to receive any kind of traditional medical care.

"There doesn't seem to be anything like this (clinic) for the long stretch of highway that we see here," said Sgt. Jon Hartling, a member of the 961st from Rippen, Wis. "So, hopefully people from the nearby villages can come here if they have someone sick with whatever kind of minor ailments, and to just improve the quality of life for these people. Some of these kids around here run around with open sores all over their legs and feet. You figure a clinic could really be able to do some good for that."

Building a clinic in this area was not easy. Just the logistics are tough. There sometimes was a wait for equipment and coordination with local contractors and supplies can be a challenge through different work ethics and styles as well as issues with language barriers.

According to Higueron clinic site supervisor, 1st Lt. Stephen Olk, his crew was up to anything.

"They're working really hard," he said. "They've had to do a lot of shoveling ... mostly by hand to get this area ready for the foundation pour. There's just a lot of physical labor for this project and they are definitely up to the challenge and they're doing everything they can to get this project finished on time."

The crew from Wisconsin faced yet another challenge upon arriving. Olk said his crew had to overcome acclimatizing to the tropics.

"A week prior to this, we were outside ice fishing in frozen lakes back home," Olk said. "Then, we came straight into 90-degree heat. It was tough on us. Some of us had to take a couple of days to become acclimated, but we're all ready to do the job now, because we really want to help out the locals and do our job well."

It is that sense of duty that drove these servicemembers to continue taking on these difficult tasks to ultimately help their foreign neighbors.

"I like the sense of accomplishment I'm getting by working on this clinic," said Spc. Stacy Guerin. "It feels good to give these people something that's going to do them some good, and last a real long time. We're doing every thing we can to make this a solid structure."

Hartling said that this has been his most rewarding training yet.

"This has been the first training in which I'm actually doing something that will really help the lives of some people. So, I really hope that it will, at least, provide the basic services so people with minor diseases don't get worse," he said.

"I can't wait to do a project like this one again," Olk said. "I definitely hope that I can do New Horizons next year."

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

by Staff Sgt. Eric Ritter

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Engineers make clinic

Soldiers work the night to get it done

HIGUERON, Panama – The construction of a medical facility in the village of Higueron reached a crucial stage during New Horizons 2007 when U.S. Army engineers completed the bracing of the clinic's walls and filled them with concrete obtained from a local supplier.

Soldiers at the site spent two nights there to ensure that every available minute was spent working toward the completion of the project, which experienced setbacks due to the rain and intense humidity of the region, as well as occasionally imperfect building materials, said Master Sgt. Michael W. Dobbs, the non-commissioned officer in charge of quality control for the various infrastructure being built during NH07.

"Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose", he explained.

Bracing and filling the clinic's plastic walls with heavy concrete is ironically a delicate process, and must be particularly accurate due to the risk of the walls blowing out, which would be impossible to correct, he added.

The walls could also cave in, said Sgt. 1st Class Tanya M. Sparks, the non commissioned officer in charge of construction of the edifice.

The phase is equally critical for quality control as well as quality assurance personnel, who must ensure the success of each segment of the mission before the engineers of the 961st Engineer Battalion of Milwaukee can continue.

Firefighters from the 340th Engineer Detachment in El Dorado, Kansas assisted with the pour by providing the water necessary to mix the cement into the thick grey sludge which fortifies the structure.

The next step at the site would have been to add plumbing and electricity,. The clinic at Higueron will have been the first of seven projects to reach completion during NH07, said Dobbs. ★

by Spc. Darius R. Kirkwood

Around The Army

Beanies For Baghdad

By 2Lt. Olivia Cobiskey

Staff Sgt. Kirk Wallace is winning the hearts and minds of young Iraqi children, one toy at a time.

During his first tour in Iraq , May 2003 to August 2004, Wallace was the program manager for Beanies For Baghdad, a non-profit civilian program that distributes toys, school supplies and clothing to Iraqi children.

"One time, when I was helping to hand out items, one of the Iraqi mothers, with tears in her eyes, said in her best English, 'Iraqi children never get anything free, especially nice toys like these,'" Wallace wrote in an e-mail to the paper from Al Taqaddum, also known as Camp TQ, where he is serving his second tour.

He started the Camp TQ branch of Beanies For Baghdad in June.

"I started helping with the program because of the joy it brought to me to give toys to the kids here. To see the faces of the Iraqi children light up at such a simple gift and gesture," said Wallace, a native of Dixon , Ill. , the boyhood-home of Ronald Reagan.

The program was started by Lt. Col. Jim Barker in April 2003, then serving with Headquarters V Corps in Iraq . His sister, Theresa Bradford, and her son, Quintin, sent him a Beanie Baby German Shepherd named "Courage" while he waited in Kuwait for the war to start. After deploying to Baghdad in April, Barker gave "Courage" to a young Iraqi girl named Sara.

The joy on Sara's face gave Barker the idea to give Beanies to other Iraqi children, and the idea just snowballed from there, Wallace said.

"We want to know our reason for being here has meaning," he said. "We can see the Iraqi children do not have toys, and all of us remember some favorite toy. B4B was a perfect thing for us to do. It allows us as Americans to change the view of one child/person at a time. It is our hope to show the Iraqis that we care."

Wallace, who joined the Army in 1990, said many of the men and women serving in Iraq help distribute toys and other items in their free time. Some go without sleep for 24 hours to take part in the program.

"There is not a greater gift than the joy of giving," Wallace said. "As soldiers, we do not make foreign policy for the countries that we deploy to, but we do work with the people of those countries face to face."

The program also gives civilians a way to be directly involved in a child's life, and help the Marines and other soldiers accomplish their mission.

Wallace is not surprised by the success of the program.

"I think many people like to reach out to others in their time of needs. Kind of like in America , when a disaster hits one state, people of the neighboring states help out. In this case, America and Iraq are world states. In being good neighbors, we sometimes have to work through the bad together."

The program recently was expanded to include other items, like children's winter clothes, that may help improve the lives of the Iraqis, Wallace said.

"There are sections of Iraq that are in severe poverty and the people ... the children, have been extremely oppressed. B4B is not trying to take the place of international humanitarian aid, but just be good neighbors."

"This goodwill does have a very strong effect on the Iraqis. We may not see the full effect for years down the line, but the way we treat these children now is the future we will get in return."

100th Army Anniversary

1908-2008 One Hundred Years of Army Strong

On April 23, 2008, the Army Reserve will officially turn 100. Commands throughout the Army Reserve will host events throughout 2007 and 2008 to celebrate the Army Reserve birthday and demonstrate 100 years of Army strong.

ARMY RESERVE
100 YEARS STRONG
1908-2008

Note on USAR Transformation

During a period of persistent conflict, the Army Reserve has evolved from a strategic reserve to an operational, expeditionary, and domestic force of skill-rich Warrior Citizens that provides unique capabilities to complement our Army and National Guard partners. Our structure is new. As FY 08 began, 78 percent of Army Reserve units have been realigned from legacy regional command and control centers to command and control under operational and functional (O&F) commands.

The 416th ENCOM, as well as your individual unit, is a part of this largest change in Army Reserve force structure in history. The 372nd Engineer Brigade in Ft. Snelling, MN, the 301st Combat Support Brigade (ME) in Ft. Lewis, WA, and the 420th Engineer Brigade in Bryan, TX have each transitioned into three down-trace commands underneath the 416th ENCOM. Each Brigade has several Battalion level commands that will assume command and control of companies and detachments based, wherever possible, on geographical location.

As the Army Reserve continues to build our new structure, we are rebalancing the force to reduce operational tempo for Active and Reserve components and beef up functional, predictable combat support and combat service support capabilities. Rebalancing our force—including the reinvestment of 16,000 spaces and growth of 1,000 new spaces as a result of the Grow the Army Program—will ultimately result in a total of seven expeditionary sustainment commands, nine sustainment brigades, and three combat support brigades (maneuver enhancement) as well as growth in other combat support and combat service support organizations.

Building the right force is crucial for success. The result of transforming our force will be an increase in ready, deployable assets to support the Long War.

Soldier's New Initiative

Sgt. Justin Edgecombe, a Soldier from Headquarters Co. 416th Eng. Command, stands behind the $2000 check he earned for recruiting a new Soldier through the community-based AR-RAP program.

Begin Earning up to $2,000

Get Recognized as an AR-RAP Recruiting Assistant!

Each future edition of The Bridge Newsmagazine will recognize every successful Recruiting Assistant with their name, photo, and unit. The Bridge Newsmagazine will also run a tally of successful RA's broken down by Brigade, with bragging rights going to the BDE with the most new recruits each quarter. Additionally, all successful RA's will be recognized by the United States Army Reserve Command with a short print and broadcast interview which will appear in at least one of many available media outlets.

Word From The Top

Lt. Gen Jack C. Stultz, Chief, Army Reserve

Army Reserve Soldiers may become recruiting assistants to work at the grassroots level to recruit in their communities, where they work and live.

"Soldiers, you can earn $2,000, while helping the Army Reserve fill its ranks", said Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, Chief, Army Reserve when he announced the launch of the Army Reserve Recruiting Assistance Program (AR-RAP). AR-RAP will allow individual Army Reserve Soldiers to earn financial incentives up to $2,000 for each successful recruiting effort.

Unlike traditional Army recruiting methods, AR-RAP involves Army Reserve unit members working on their own time to conduct recruiting in partnership with a contractor for non-prior and prior service recruits who contract and later complete training requirements.

To become a Recruiting Assistant, Soldiers must first complete on-line training with the program's contractor. Upon completing the on-line training, Soldiers will become certified as RAs and are immediately available to begin conducting their personalized recruiting efforts. Once certified, RAs receive a welcome kit and a recruiter store account from which to order marketing materials to support recruiting efforts.

The Recruiting Assistants are expected to work with their prospective Army Recruits throughout their accession process, but are not authorized to make legally binding commitments regarding bonuses, incentives or guarantee specific jobs upon joining the Army Reserve. Eventually, all prospects will be linked with full-time Army Reserve recruiters, who will assist RAs by administering the contract process, and schedule required medical and aptitude tests for recruits prior to their accession. The RAs will also serve as mentors to recruits until they depart for basic training; preparing them for military service.

AR-RAP leverages the talents of Army Reserve Soldiers by allowing them to conduct their own recruiting efforts within their local community - to increase exposure of the Army Reserve and inform members of the community regarding the benefits of joining the Army Reserve.

The benefits of joining the Army Reserve include money for college under the Montgomery GI Bill, student loan repayment programs, tuition assistance, and possible enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses (depending on military occupational specialty).

The Army Reserve offers many career opportunities as well as several leadership development and civilian-skills related training, which are valuable and marketable for private sector employment.

Also, security clearances obtained while in the Army Reserve and drug free status make AR Soldiers particularly valued by employers. Additionally, there is the opportunity to earn a retirement income, after 20 years of qualifying service with monthly payments at age 60, and participate in a thrift savings program (similar to a 401K program), allowing regular contributions which are taken off the top of Reserve earnings, lowering pre-tax income.

For more information on Army Reserve Recruiting Assistance Program, you may log-on to www. AR-RAP.com.

America Supports You: ESGR Seeks Freedom Award Nominees

Story By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15, 2007 – The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is seeking employers with records of stellar support for military employees.

The group is accepting nominations for the 2008 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards through Jan. 21.

"Almost one-half of the U.S. military is comprised of the National Guard and Reserve," said Beth Sherman, an ESGR spokeswoman. "The Department of Defense shares these citizen warriors with their civilian employers, many of whom provide significant support to (these) employees."

Past recipients of the award have provided full salary, a continuation of benefits, care packages and other forms of help such as home and lawn care for families of employees fulfilling military obligations.

"While all employer support is exemplary, small employers that go above and beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act to assist their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve, really set the bar high (last year)," Sherman said.

USERRA prohibits discrimination against people because of military service.

Augustine and Sons, a family-owned farm in Iowa, is one example of a small business that goes out of its way for its employees, Sherman said.

When one of its employees, 1st Sgt. Matthew Strasser, an Iowa Army National Guardsman, was deployed, the farm lost half its staff. Yet the Augustine family offered its continuing support to the family Strasser left behind.

"They allowed Strasser's wife and … two sons to live on the farm rent-free," Sherman said. "The Augustines took the boys fishing, attended their sports games and fixed their dirt bikes."

Large businesses previously recognized for their exemplary support include Sears and Starbucks. The commonwealth of Massachusetts and the state of Tennessee both are past recipients of the public-sector award.

ESGR is encouraging National Guardsmen, reservists and their family members to nominate employers who offer their employees similar support. Nomination forms are available on the committee's Web site, www.esgr.org.

Last year, 1,119 nominations were received. To date, ESGR has received 268 already this year.

"Given that employer support is so strong, we hope reserve-component members will see fit to nominate their deserving employers," Sherman said. "This kind of recognition establishes a benchmark for all employers, and we hope this recognition is a small thank you from the Department of Defense."

Winners selected in three categories will be announced in early spring and will receive their awards during a Sept. 18 award ceremony.

Founded in 1972, the National Committee for Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve is a Defense Department agency established to promote cooperation and understanding between reserve-component members and their civilian employers. The organization also is a supporter of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and corporations with military personnel and their families serving at home and abroad.

Then-Defense Secretary William Perry instituted the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award in 1996. ★

Engineers Transfer 3 Completed Power Plants to Iraqis

Army engineers continued their mission of helping the Government of Ira jump start its electrical infrastructure by completing three power projects in the Gulf Region South district.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers turned three 132kV electrical substations over to Iraqi authorities in the Basrah Province, according to Tom Eidson, head of engineering and construction at GRS.

The Iraqi people currently are enjoying more electricity than at any time in the past, Mr. Eidson said. As more and more electrical projects come to completion, he said, the Iraqi people have more electrical power available for greater lengths of time and, thus, enjoy a higher standard of living.

These 132kV substation facilities (Al-Toba, Al-Hammar and Al-Gurnah) help correct distribution problems in the system by relieving overload on transformers and switchgears," said Engineer Firas, the project engineer with the Basrah Area Office.

Mr. Eidson said the power is not only being made available for personal use, but also for commercial and industrial use, which will strengthen and broaden the economic foundation of Iraq.

"Al-Toba 132kV substation project will provide the electricity to support the Toba tank oil transfer and storage facility, which is the backbone of the oil conveyance system for the Rumayla oil field," Mr. Eidson said. "The economy of Iraq is based largely on revenues from the marketing of its oil products. This facility is critical to getting Iraq oil to the world oil market."

The Al-Gurnah 132kV substation was turned over to the Ministry of Electricity in mid-December and is supplying electricity to about 80,000 Iraqis. Substation Photo by A. Al Bahrani)

The rehabilitation project at Al-Hammar 132kV substation is a critical element of the Al-Hammar and Hammar-Mishrif gas/oil separation facilities and will help provide the Basrah International Airport and the Sweet Water Facility with a more reliable and secure transmission network, Mr. Firas said.

Al-Gurnah 132kV substation project will improve reliability and safety standards for the electrical distribution network, reduce electrical outages, and supply electricity to a population of approximately 80,000 people, he added.

"Work consisted at Al-Toba and Al-Hammar substations of general maintenance, replacement of the damaged transformers and switch gears, and cosmetic improvements," Mr. Firas said. "While the equipment used in the Al-Gurnah project includes two, 63 megavolt transformers, a building control room, a high voltage switch gear room, a protection fence and a guard house.

"All the substations were manual and using the 1983 technology. but now they are computerized and using the 2005 technology," the engineer added. ✪

(A. Al Bahrani is a public affairs specialist with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq.)

Parting Shots

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOMAS ROFKAHR