

# WARRIOR MEDIC MONTHLY



An Army Reserve Medical Command Publication

## New Military Handbook Available for Guard and Reserve



ARLINGTON, VA – Military Handbooks has announced the release of a new 2008 handbook for military personnel, the 2008 Guard and Reserve Military Handbook.

This handbook, written specifically for members of the Reserve Component, includes a variety of information about military pay, benefits, and education. To receive your own copy of this handbook, simply go to our Website - [www.militaryhandbooks.com](http://www.militaryhandbooks.com) and submit your request. Don't forget to tell all of your military colleagues about this free handbook!

About the 2008 Guard and Reserve Military Handbook: This unique handbook, written specifically for the National Guard and Reserves, gives you everything you need to know about serving in the Reserve Component, including: drill pay and enlistment bonuses; allowances like BAS and BAH; re-employment rights; education and training benefits specific to the Guard and Reserve; health care; and retirement.

Understanding the benefits you receive from serving in the Reserve Component can be tricky, especially if you don't know where to go for more information. This handbook combines it all into one easy to use guide.

To download your own FREE copies

of the 2008 Military Handbooks, please visit: [www.militaryhandbooks.com](http://www.militaryhandbooks.com).

## Airlines Institute Additional Fees for Government Travelers



WASHINGTON - Many airlines have recently modified checked baggage policies and are moving toward instituting additional fees for other services.

Effective 12/05/2008,

Government travelers on Delta domestic flights will no longer be exempt from the fee to check a first bag. (Exception: The first bag is free for Delta tickets purchased before 11/05/08 for travel on or after 12/05/08.) Additionally, United Airlines has instituted a fee for "human" customer service. While United is the only airline to apply this fee, others might soon follow. Costs for this service are non-reimbursable. DoD travelers should always contact the Commercial Travel Office rather than contacting the air carrier directly.

As a reminder, Military members traveling on official business are required to show military ID in order to check up to three bags with no charge. Weight allowance and size restrictions vary by airline. Military Services should ensure that members requiring excess accompanied baggage have "Excess Accompanied Baggage" authorized on the travel orders. Military members who do not have a Government travel charge

card or personal charge card are strongly advised to request an advance if such charges are anticipated.

Suggested Action(s): Check airline websites for the most current information on policies and additional fees. For information about fee exceptions for government and military travelers, review GSA's Baggage Allowance Fact Sheet available at:

[http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA\\_BASIC&contentId=19374&noc=T](http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_BASIC&contentId=19374&noc=T)

If you require additional support, contact your Commercial Travel Office.

## Department Of Defense, INOVA Partner To Employ Military Spouses



WASHINGTON - The Department of Defense and Inova Health System joined in a partnership Thursday to promote access to training and healthcare jobs for the husbands and wives of active duty service members.

Inova, a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia, employs more than 15,000 people in hospitals, nursing homes, emergency and urgent care centers in the area. "We have a national shortage of allied health professionals across the countries, and we have spouses looking for positive, portable careers" said Leslye Arshnt, deputy under secretary of defense for military community and family policy.

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**Do you have a story to tell?** The goal of the Army Reserve Medical Command's Public Affairs Officer is to feature stories in this publication that represent units from all over our command's region of responsibility. We are always seeking stories that would be of interest to our readers. Contributions are welcome. Story ideas as well as written articles and photos for consideration should be submitted to [ARMEDCOMPAAO@usar.army.mil](mailto:ARMEDCOMPAAO@usar.army.mil), or call 1-877-891-3281, extension 3730.



"Inova health services is making a concrete commitment to military spouses who are interested in the allied health field."

The public-private partnership is a pilot program designed to benefit both parties. Inova seeks to attract and develop military spouses into careers in critical healthcare occupations. The partnership is also designed to support military spouses currently in the healthcare and nursing professions who might not otherwise remain in those jobs while their spouse is in the military. Today's military spouses represent a significant, young, diverse and well-educated component of America's labor force.

Inova will work with the DoD, community and professional partners to launch a national Military to Medicine program. Education, training and certification and licensure in portable career fields will greatly increase their employment opportunities and reduce the period of time between moves that spouses are unemployed.

"If this effort is successful" said Arsht, "then we'll take this method to other hospital systems throughout the country. What we'd really like to see over time, is that if we have a cadre of spouses...we can eventually help them move from one system to another. And that's really part of the effort here...to help spouses choose a successful career that's in high demand and portable to help them connect to the next employer as they move around."

For the 675,000 spouses of active duty service members, careers can be difficult to manage due to the frequency of moves throughout a military career. DoD surveys show 77 percent of spouses reporting they need or want to work. The Inova partnership with DoD follows a similar agreement between Inova and the U.S. Army Reserve that provides new Army Reserve soldiers opportunities for employment at Inova Health System facilities once they successfully complete military occupational training in areas of critical clinical support.

DoD has also entered into a partnership with RE/MAX, the nationwide realty firm, to provide military spouses with training and licensure for careers in real estate, and with the Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI) and the Medical Transcription Industry Association (MTIA), to promote medical careers.

Military spouses who are interested in working in any of the Inova Health System facilities in the Northern Virginia area, or have experience in the health care or allied health fields, are invited to visit **Inova's Web site at [www.inova.org/careers](http://www.inova.org/careers)** and apply for the position(s) that are of interest.

Once they have applied, they can expect to receive an email confirmation. Should any questions arise, military spouses are encouraged to send an email to: [HRIS@inova.org](mailto:HRIS@inova.org). This email address has

been created specifically for military spouses to address questions or concerns, and will be checked daily by Inova Health System human resources staff dedicated to military spouse recruitment.

## TRICARE Reserve and Guard Family Benefit Now Permanent



FALLS CHURCH, Va. - Eligible families of activated National Guard and Reserve members will continue to save up to \$300 in annual deductible now that a TRICARE "demonstration"

program is a permanent benefit.

Eligible family members of Guard and Reserve personnel activated for more than 30 days under federal orders in support of a contingency operation are made eligible for TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra, which have annual deductible. While they may be eligible to enroll into TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members, which have no deductible, many may choose to stay with TRICARE Standard or Extra.

Introduced as one of the first TRICARE healthcare enhancements after Sept. 11, 2001 to assist the increasing number of National Guard and Reserve servicemembers activated to support the Global War on Terrorism, the benefit waiving annual deductible has been a demonstration project for over seven years.

"The demonstration has worked well and the benefit is not changing," said the Deputy Director of TRICARE Management Activity, Maj. Gen. Elder Granger. "We simply want to make sure our Guard and Reserve families know this is a permanent benefit now that final federal regulation has been published."

Guard or Reserve families often meet annual deductible under their commercial plans before they get activated. Waiving the TRICARE Standard and Extra deductible means eligible families will not have to pay additional deductible under TRICARE. The annual deductible for Standard and Extra is \$300 for families.

"National Guard and Reserve members and their families make huge sacrifices to protect our freedom. We don't want to see them sacrifice even more by paying deductible twice in one year," Granger said.

The published regulation also contains provisions that make it easier for Reserve and Guard members to continue to see their family physicians by potentially increasing the amount that can be paid to out-of-network health care providers.

Since eligibility for TRICARE benefits is determined by the services, to ensure

family members are eligible for the TRICARE Reserve Family Benefit, activated Reserve and Guard members should visit their local military ID card issuing facility and update their information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

## New Leave and Liberty Policies to Implement the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act



PINELLAS PARK, Fla. - There are four new leave policies effective immediately, retroactive to January 28, 2008

First, annual leave accrual is temporarily (until December 31, 2010) increased from 60 to 75 days. Service members may now carryover up to 75 days of accrued leave, beginning with the fiscal year changeover from FY 08 to FY 09 (i.e. a service member with 75 days of leave on September 30, 2008 will not lose that leave on October 1, 2008).

Second, special leave accrual (SLA) retention limits are increased. Under the new limits, SLA earned in combat zones may now be kept for four fiscal years; SLA earned in support of operations may now be kept for two fiscal years. Absent further statutory revisions, the higher combat zone retention limit applies only to SLA accumulated during the period of October 1, 2008 through December 31, 2010.

Third, an additional one-time SLA sell back is authorized for enlisted Service members. Under this provision, an enlisted Service member may sell back up to 30 days of SLA (this does not apply to officers). Such a sell back counts towards the Service member's cap of 60 days over a career. This provision has no termination date.

Fourth, authorized special rest and recuperation (SR&R) absence with transportation benefit is increased from 15 to 20 days. This applies to personnel completing an overseas duty tour extension longer than 12 months. This SR&R authorization is distinct from and not to be confused with the rest and recuperation program in paragraph 6.15 of reference (a). This provision has no termination date.

Point of contact at AR-MEDCOM for questions: Master Sgt. Marvin Washington, Resource Management Operations NCO, 727-563-3729

## Suspension of All USB External Storage Devices on DoD Networks

FORT MCPHERSON, Ga. - This is an official message from the United States Army Reserve Command (USARC) security and automation (G-2/6).

All users are to immediately suspend the use of all memory sticks, thumb drives, camera flash memory cards, and any other external storage devices on all Department of Defense (DOD) network computers using Windows Operating Systems.

USARC G-2/6 Data Center will implement an Enterprise-wide technical solution to disable these devices. This technical restriction will remain in place until DOD restrictions are lifted.

Do not contact the help desk on this issue as this is an army wide mandate which the helpdesk can not provide assistance.

## Troop Support Group Launches New Web site

By Sharon Foster, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - A troop-support group that provides education on the brain's and body's natural responses to stress launched its redesigned Web site yesterday.

"Our Web site is completely redesigned to power our mission of providing the best education, training and resources for supporting strength and resilience in all areas of military life," said Elizabeth Hawkins, executive director of "One Freedom."

"The new One Freedom Web site is a portal for our nation's warriors and for everyone who cares about them to connect with a wealth of knowledge and new possibilities for strength and healing," she said.

The Web site contains a listing of One Freedom programs for military servicemembers, veterans, families and care providers, with easy online registration.

A growing list of resources -- information, organizations and individuals -- is dedicated to supporting military communities using articles, newsletters, videos, links and listings covering a variety of information.

Visitors also can sign up for a quarterly newsletter and donate to support One Freedom's programs.

One Freedom will continue to offer workshops and training focused on how to self-regulate intense life experiences, trauma and everyday stressors.

One of its most popular workshops ? is a two-hour program that teaches veterans and family members about the brain and body and how they are changed under prolonged

stress. A range of skills is taught, including simple, easy-to-use exercises aimed at improving well-being, inner strength and personal communication.

"This introductory workshop frames military stress in a normalizing framework that takes the emphasis off 'mental-behavioral' and puts it on our natural response to stress, especially under chronic and acute conditions," Hawkins said.

The "Strength after Service" series includes sub-topics that provide veterans and family members education on the cornerstones of health such as sleep, nutrition, exercise and structure. One Freedom also offers day-long training on communication for couples and families, addiction training and assistance with understanding the various therapeutic modalities available today.

Marine Corps veteran and One Freedom trainer Dan Taslitz said the workshops "are a powerful path to strength and healing for our military servicemembers, veterans and families."

"It goes way beyond a yellow ribbon in supporting our nation's warriors by providing the knowledge and skills to integrate their experiences and create bridges of strength back to their families and communities," he said.

For more information, visit: [www.onefreedom.org/about\\_us](http://www.onefreedom.org/about_us)

## America Supports You: Volunteer Mental Health Professionals

By Samantha L. Quigley, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - The Soldiers Project is a private, non-profit, independent group of volunteer licensed mental health professionals including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and marriage and family therapists.

They provide free counseling and support to military service members who have served or who expect to serve in the Iraq and/or Afghanistan conflicts and to veterans of those conflicts. They see active duty as well as members of activated Reserve or Guard units. In addition, their services are available to the families and other loved ones of service members.

They provide help to service members and families struggling with issues related to the overwhelming trauma of war including the cycle from pre-deployment to deployment to homecoming and re-entry to civilian life. Their services are entirely free of charge and do not report to any government agency.

To get an appointment, Call toll-free 877-576-5343 and leave your info if necessary.

You will get a call back within hours. After a brief telephone conversation with an intake professional, The Soldiers Project will find you a therapist in your area.

The Soldiers Project is a supporter of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and companies with servicemembers and their families serving at home and abroad.

For additional information visit: The Soldiers Project, [www.thesoldiersproject.org](http://www.thesoldiersproject.org)

## Vets, Troops Not in Uniform Now Can Salute Flag

By American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - A change to federal law allows U.S. veterans and military personnel not in uniform to render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem.

The law took effect earlier this month, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs news release.

"The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation's armed forces," Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. James B. Peake said. "This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag."

The provision builds on a change that went into effect last year. That change authorized veterans and military personnel not in uniform to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag.

Traditionally, veterans' service organizations rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's headgear. Otherwise, as with all other Americans, the etiquette is to place the right hand over the heart.

The most recent change was part of the 2009 Defense Authorization Act, which President Bush signed Oct. 14.

U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran, sponsored both pieces of legislation.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Inhofe said in a written statement. "Veterans and servicemembers continue representing the military services even when not in uniform. The U.S. Code is now consistent for veterans and all service members in regards to the symbolic gesture of the military salute."

## New Social Media Platform Helps Military Members With Relocation

By Jamie Findlater, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - From a civilian perspective, it may be hard to understand the challenge of constant relocation that comes with military service. Finding new schools, identifying new organizations to join

and tracking down a safe neighborhood can be an overwhelming process. As a result, many military families turn to others in the military community for information and resources.

"What one person doesn't know, someone else usually does," retired Army Col. Dale Kissinger said. "The problem is finding that person."

Kissinger is co-founder of MilitaryAvenue.com, a military-oriented Web site that offers moving, travel and lifestyle services and discounts. The site recently launched a new online platform for relocation information exchange.

"MilitaryAvenue Answers" is a community-based question and answer platform that allows the military community to seek information and assistance directly from other military members, the local base community and industry experts.

To access the online forum, visitors can go to [www.militaryavenue.com/answers](http://www.militaryavenue.com/answers), type in a question and get answers from a variety of sources. The forum is organized so users can either ask general questions such as "What moving company offers a military discount?" or more specific area-based questions such as "What is the best pizza place near Fort Bliss?"

Once a question is asked, it is forwarded to a stable of volunteer experts and posted online so anyone with relevant information can respond.

"The platform allows for multiple responses to help ensure a well-rounded answer for each question," Dan Kissinger, the company's chief executive officer, said. "All information will be permanently catalogued and available to assist other military members with similar questions and concerns."

The new tool empowers members of the military community to help one another by tapping into others' individual knowledge and experience, he added.

"MilitaryAvenue.com began as a way to disseminate information about local base communities and the military life to its highly mobile members," the CEO said. "MilitaryAvenue Answers is empowering those members to disseminate their own information."

Dan Kissinger said he hopes the plat-

form will be a useful resource not only for military members and their families, but also for military "outsiders" interested in better understanding the life and sacrifices made by military families or who may have access to additional information and resources.

The interactive nature of the site is geared to assist younger military families who have grown up with the Internet and rely on community forums like this regularly for information exchange, Dan Kissinger said. "With this flexible and easily updated platform, MilitaryAvenue.com is providing a much-needed resource for younger military members accustomed to seeking information from social media communities," he explained.

Looking forward, he said he is hopeful that this tool will set a precedent in how military members access and share information with one another.

"The goal is to move the entire site toward an exchange of information, rather than the display of information," he said. "There needs to be more than a one-way conversation."

## 'Troops to Teachers' Translates Military Experience to Classroom

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



FORT MEADE, Md. - About 60 servicemembers preparing to retire or separate from the military got the word loud and clear during a recent Transition Assistance Program workshop here: If Uncle Sam can't have

you any more, the public school system would love to have you.

School districts around the country are desperate for the maturity and experience troops have gained through military service, said Robert Henry, who coordinates the Troops to Teachers Program for Maryland and the District of Columbia.

The Defense Department launched the Troops to Teachers program in 1994 to attract departing military members into teaching positions in low-income and underprivileged school districts. Fourteen years later, the program has placed more than 11,000 former troops into public schools nationwide, Henry told the group. Almost half the TTT teachers work in high schools, 30 percent in middle schools and about 20 percent in elementary schools. More than 80 percent of them are men, compared to about 25 percent of traditional teachers.

To qualify for the program, candidates need a bachelor's degree and teacher certification that the Troops to Teachers program can help finance, Henry said.

A retired Navy petty officer first class, Henry called the Troops to Teachers program a great opportunity for former servicemembers who enjoy working with young people and want to continue serving their communities.

He called former troops prime candidates for teaching jobs -- particularly in math, the sciences and special education -- who bring a unique quality to their classrooms.

"They have real-world experience, and they bring a level of maturity, along with good communications skills," he said. "Most have a sense of service and want to continue to give back to the community."

"But beyond that," he continued, "troops bring a sense of commitment to mission accomplishment. For them, failure is not an option. There's a kind of mentality they bring to the job that means they will do whatever they need to do to get something done and to do it right."

Participants in the program say military service gave them the skills they needed for the job: discipline, patience and a readiness to face challenges. They also report a personal satisfaction that comes with working with young people, Henry said.

Seventy-five percent of TTT teachers were still teaching five years after going through the program, Henry said. After 10 years, 60 percent were still involved in education, as teachers or administrators.

Among them is Ernie Jackson, who returned to his hometown of Port Jervis, N.Y., in 2000 to teach fifth grade and special education. Jackson, who retired as an Army infantry officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel, said he found the Troops to Teachers program a good way to transition into the education field.

Jackson said he drew on his 20 years of military experience as he moved into the classroom, tapping into the management skills the Army taught him, along with the ability to work under pressure and deal with people. He said he applied the Army's way of training troops, emphasizing group dynamics and team building -- "skills you need in life, but that you can't get on the Internet or on a cell phone."

Jackson said that as he rose through the education ranks, becoming a vice principal, then a principal, he got the satisfaction from his interactions with his students.

"You change kids' lives," he said. "It's a great opportunity to make a difference in a young person's life. And there's a tremendous amount of gratification that comes with that."

Now a principal who hires teachers, Jackson said he seeks out former servicemembers through the Troops to Teachers program. "Having time in the military gives them a definite edge in my book," he said. "I find there are a lot of parallels between teaching and the military. We need service-

men and women to become teachers.”

Jackson isn't alone in praising the Troops to Teachers program. School districts rave about the teachers they recruited through the program, Henry told the Fort Meade troops. Ninety percent of principals report that TTT teachers are more effective than traditional teachers, particularly in classroom management and student discipline. Eight-nine percent of principals said TTT teachers have a greater impact than other teachers with equal teaching experience on student achievement.

“The school districts that have us all want more of us,” Henry told students at the Fort Meade transition workshop. “It's a great opportunity to build on the military skills and experience you have built, and to use them in a meaningful way as you begin a new career.”

**Related Sites: Troops to Teachers Program** [www.ed.gov/programs/troops-to-teachers/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/troops-to-teachers/index.html)

## Support Group's Scholarships Help Spouses Finish Education

By American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Military spouses with an eye on professional certification or a post-secondary education may not have to foot the entire bill, thanks to a National Military Family Association scholarship program.

The group is accepting applications for its annual Joanne Holbrook Patton Military Spouse Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to spouses or surviving spouses of servicemembers on active duty or in the National Guard or reserves and spouses of military retirees.

The scholarships, ranging from \$500 to \$1,000, can be used for tuition, fees, and school room and board while the spouse obtains professional certification or attends post-secondary or graduate school.

The number of scholarships awarded each year varies, depending on funding. But thanks to a partnership with the Fisher House and Folds of Honor foundations, the association is able to provide a larger number of scholarships.

Scholarship selection is based on answers to survey questions used to help the association advocate for education changes on the applicant's behalf.

Applications are accepted online only, through the National Military Family Association Web site, <http://www.nmfa.org>, and must be submitted by midnight Feb. 1.

Association officials said they started the scholarship program to recognize that unique challenges, including frequent moves

and deployments, can interfere with military spouses' ability to complete their education. The association also has created a Web portal at <http://www.nmfa.org/SpouseEd> that's stocked with military spouse education resources and information to help spouses reach their career and educational goals.

**Related Sites: National Military Family Association, [www.nmfa.org](http://www.nmfa.org) - Fisher House Foundation, [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org) - Folds of Honor Foundation, [www.foldsofhonor.org](http://www.foldsofhonor.org) - Military Spouse Education Resources [www.nmfa.org/SpouseEd](http://www.nmfa.org/SpouseEd)**

## TRICARE Reserve Select Premium Drop



WASHINGTON - The Department of Defense Health Affairs announced that on January 1, 2009, monthly premiums on TRICARE Reserve Select will be reduced.

Individual coverage will drop 41.3% from \$81.00 to \$47.51, and TRS family coverage will drop 29% from \$253.00 to \$180.17.

The Reserve Officers Association was the first to testify on this before Congress, highlighting that the original premiums were calculated on the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan costs. The Association emphasized that the Department of Defense (DoD) needed to base its calculations on its own health care system costs. Congress agreed, and directed the Government Accountability Office GAO to do a study. GAO's final report (GAO-08-104) supported ROA's position. In the FY-2009, National Defense Authorization Act, DoD health affairs was directed to recalculate the premiums to be based on 28 percent of actual cost.

“ROA is pleased with how quickly the Pentagon responded to Congress's request,” said Col. Ladd Pattillo, USAR (Ret), ROA's President. “Hopefully, this will be an incentive for more people to participate in the TRICARE Reserve Select health care program.”

The Reserve Officers Association will continue to seek refunds for the overpayment of earlier premiums, and petition Congress to permit federal employees to participate in TRS.

The Association is also working to allow gray-area retirees to buy into TRICARE Reserve Select. Legislation was introduced late last year by Rep. Latta (R-Ohio), proposing that gray-area retirees pay 100 percent of the TRS premiums. While not passed, the idea gained support in both the House and Senate. The recalculated premiums will mean lower costs for the buy-in at

with an approximate monthly premium of \$170 for individuals, and \$645 for families.

## America Supports You: Group Makes Job Hunt Easier for Disabled Vets

By Samantha L. Quigley,  
American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - The hunt for a fulfilling job can be frustrating, but disabled veterans have a new online tool available to help them tackle that task.

Job Opportunities for Disabled American Veterans is a nationally based online recruitment application geared specifically to assist disabled veterans find employment.

“Our goal here is simple, to connect disabled American veterans with employers who are proactive in hiring them,” said Nicholas Corso, project director of disABLEDperson Inc., Job Opportunities for Disabled American Veterans' parent organization. “This is a free service to the DAV community.”

Employers listing job openings on the site will pay a nominal fee to help maintain the site, he added.

The organization's site offers resume writing tips as well as pointers on how to give a good interview. Those wishing to search the job listings, however, must register with the site.

Disabled veterans also can take advantage of “recruitABILITY,” an application DisABLEDperson Inc., offers to the wider disabled community. “Many state and federal agencies, along with 1,200 employers nationally, have been and are using recruitABILITY as a recruitment tool to find skilled workers with disabilities,” Corso said.

The organization also holds job fairs for disabled students who are finishing college and getting ready to transition into the workforce. For those interested in taking classes, disABLEDperson Inc., holds two scholarship competitions annually.

DisABLEDperson Inc. is a new supporter of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and companies with servicemembers and their families serving at home and abroad.

“We at disABLEDperson Inc., believe that our [affiliation] with America Supports You will give us great exposure to a targeted group of individuals, disabled American veterans, who may not have heard of our efforts,” Corso said. “It simply adds to our credibility as we move forward with our different initiatives.”

The organization will participate in the National Combined Federal Campaign beginning in September, he added.

**Related Sites:** disABLEDperson Inc., [www.jofdav.com](http://www.jofdav.com); America Supports You, [www.americasupportsyou.mil](http://www.americasupportsyou.mil)

## Defense Department Launches 'Wounded Warrior Diaries'

By Navy Lt. Jennifer Cragg  
Special to American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Defense Department officials today launched the "Wounded Warrior Diaries," a multimedia Web tribute in which American servicemembers wounded in combat share stories of their service, including their hard-won battles on the road to recovery and the ups and downs of life in the wake of injury.

Located at [www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2008/0908\\_wwd/index.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2008/0908_wwd/index.html), the Wounded Warrior Diaries feature videos of servicemembers relaying their stories in their own words. The videos are accompanied by a written account of their experiences. The site launched with four diaries, and a new diary will be added each month.

"The diaries are intended to be sources of strength, encouragement and reassurance for other wounded troops and their families," Navy Lt. Cmdr. Brook DeWalt, DoD's director of new media, said. "They illustrate the ultimate triumph over injury? returning to full and active lives through hard work and the support of loved ones, the community and the military family."

In addition, the process of creating the diaries is meant to be therapeutic for the servicemembers, DeWalt said, noting that in some cases, their spouses and children take part in the interviews. "Finally," he added, "the diaries are created to honor the service, sacrifice, courage and determination of all

who voluntarily serve in harm's way."

The Wounded Warrior Diaries' launch in November was part of DoD's Warrior Care Month.

## Department of Defense Launches National Resource Directory For Wounded Warriors, Families And Caregivers



WASHINGTON - The Department of Defense today launched the National Resource Directory, a collaborative effort between the departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans

Affairs.

The directory is a Web-based network of care coordinators, providers and support partners with resources for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families, families of the fallen and those who support them.

"The directory is the visible demonstration of our national will and commitment to make the journey from 'survive to thrive' a reality for those who have given so much. As new links are added each day by providers and partners, coverage from coast to coast will grow even greater ensuring that no part of that journey will ever be made alone," said Lynda C. Davis, Ph.D., deputy under secretary of defense for military community and family policy.

Located at <http://www.national-resourcedirectory.org>, the directory offers more than 10,000 medical and non-medical services and resources to help service members and veterans achieve personal and professional goals along their journey from recovery through rehabilitation to community reintegration.

"The VA is extremely proud to be a partner in this innovative resource. This combination of federal, state, and community-based resources will serve as a tremendous asset for all service members, veterans, their families and those who care for them. The community is essential to the successful reintegration of our veterans, and these groups greatly enhance the directory's scope," said Karen S. Guice, M.D., executive director, federal recovery care coordination program at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"The National Resource Directory will prove to be a valuable tool for wounded, ill, and injured service members and their families as they wind their way through the maze of benefits and services available to them in their transition to civilian life. The Department of Labor is pleased to have the opportunity to work with our partners at DoD," said Charles S. Ciccolella, the assistant secretary of labor for the veterans' employment and training service.

The National Resource Directory is organized into six major categories: Benefits and Compensation; Education, Training and Employment; Family and Caregiver

Support; Health; Housing and Transportation; and Services and Resources. It also provides helpful checklists, Frequently Asked Questions, and connections to peer support groups. All information on the Web site can be found through a general or state and local search tool.

The National Resource Directory's launch in November is a key feature of Warrior Care Month.

## America Supports You: Postal Service Offers Discount

By Samantha L. Quigley  
American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Military families have long used the U.S. Postal Service's flat-rate shipping boxes to send care packages around the globe. Since March 3, they'll received a price

break.

The discount applies only to the new "Priority Mail Large Flat-Rate Box," which normally carries a \$12.95 price tag for shipping. However, when the 12-by-12-by-5.5-inch box is sent to an AFO or FPO address, a \$2 discount applies, dropping the cost to \$10.95.

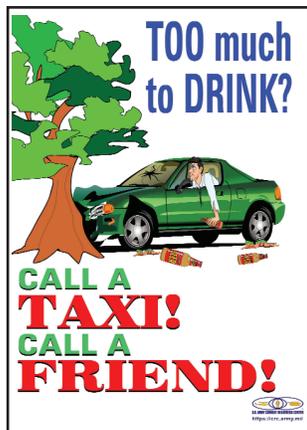
"This is the first time the Postal Service has offered a special price for our armed forces serving overseas," said Postmaster General John Potter. "We're proud that family and friends will be able to use the new, larger-sized box to send much-appreciated packages from home to our dedicated troops overseas."

The new boxes will be available in post offices nationwide or can be ordered online at [www.usps.com/supplies](http://www.usps.com/supplies). They're also available by calling 1-800-610-8734.

Some of the new boxes carry the America Supports You logo. America Supports You is a Defense Department program connecting citizens and companies with servicemembers and their families serving at home and abroad.

"It's terrific that the Postal Service continues to think of ways to help Americans support our troops and their families," said Allison Barber, deputy assistant secretary of defense for internal communication, community relations and public liaison. "Postage is always a concern when shipping care packages, and this new flat-rate box means our home-front groups and supportive citizens can do more with their resources.

"We're especially pleased that some of the boxes will bear the America Supports You logo, reminding our servicemembers that they have our nation's support," she added.



The boxes bearing the America Supports You logo will be available only online or at select post offices near military bases. All flat-rate boxes are available for international shipping, though the discount applies only to the large flat-rate box, and only if it's being shipped to an APO or FPO address.

## Sending Troops Care Packages

By Maj. William D. Ritter, AR-MEDCOM PAO



PINELLAS PARK, Fla. - Sending care packages to any Soldier is now more difficult.

For security reasons, all packages must go to a specific soldier. No longer can a package or card be sent to "any soldier". It is easy for families to send packages or cards as they are going to their specific loved one.

It makes it now more difficult for organizations to send packages however as the Army cannot give out Soldier contact information.

Two organizations however can help groups, like churches, scouts or civic groups to collect items and they send them to Soldiers. They are accredited by the Department of Defense.

These groups ensure success.

### Operation Homefront

100 Schertz Parkway, Suite C  
Schertz, TX 78154  
210-659-7756

ecarepackage@operationhomefront.net  
[www.ecarepackage.org](http://www.ecarepackage.org)

### Packages From Home

1201 S. 7th Ave. Suite 50,  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Packing Center: 602-254-2818  
Admin Office: 602-253-0284  
[www.packagesfromhome.org](http://www.packagesfromhome.org)  
info@packagesfromhome.org

Packages From Home offers you the opportunity to send in specific items by visiting their website.

Organizations can also choose to be a sponsor. To be a sponsor, an organization (or your company) would make a monthly (or quarterly or yearly) commitment to donate a certain amount to Packages From Home.

A sponsor can donate money, or specific items that are needed by the troops. Some sponsors donate a fixed amount each month, others donate a percentage of their sales commissions, or a flat amount (i.e., ABC Plumbing donates a portion of money from each service call). Other sponsors

donate specific items (Lindsey Coffee donates ground coffee), or a manufacturer might discount an item they manufacture down to their cost, to provide certain items for the troops that are needed but not normally found in a grocery or department store.

If your organization is interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact Packages From Home directly.

## National Resource Directory Helps Wounded Warriors

By Jamie Findlater, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - A Web-based network of support for wounded warriors, veterans and their families, as well as the families of the fallen, has sprung from a collaborative

effort by the departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs.

The National Resource Directory will include information on care coordinators, health care providers and support partners, Dr. Linda Davis, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy, said during an "ASY Live" interview today on BlogTalkRadio.com.

"Working with wounded ill and injured servicemembers and their families, there [are] many resources and individuals available to help them," Davis said. "We needed one source that can tell us where everyone in the country is who wants to help our wounded warriors and their families."

The directory is part of a larger effort by the departments to improve wounded warrior care. Davis said research showed that in the military hospital alone, servicemembers received offers from 35 people for 38 types of support.

"While the families did appreciate that, they also found it confusing," she said. "They didn't know who to call at the right time in the right place for the right service. The family oftentimes becomes the primary caregiver 24/7/365, and that is extremely stressful, both physically and emotionally."

To help them navigate the system, servicemembers and their families are assigned a care coordinator who ensures the recovery team works together jointly and collaboratively. Each recovering servicemember has an individualized recovery plan with personal and professional goals.

Previously, Davis said, emphasis had been placed on recovery in the hospital. These plans focus more on what happens after they leave, she explained.

"Our challenge was to get people to not only survive, but to thrive in their new conditions that will be facing them for the

rest of their lives," she said. "We wanted to focus more on community reintegration, and to do that, we needed even more partners to be engaged."

To facilitate the coordination of these plans and ensure a smooth community reintegration, the directory is inter-linked to these personalized online plans to facilitate accessibility to available resources.

"Say you are populating the plan and the servicemember is talking about returning to Aurora, Kan., and needs housing adaptation and special tutoring for their autistic special needs child," Davis said. "You can go into the directory and contact both the governmental and nongovernmental organizations in and around Aurora and line up appointments and personnel to be of support way before the servicemember goes back to Aurora."

Davis noted that while the federal government has a lot of benefits and services available to servicemembers, it also is important to take state, county and locality benefits into consideration.

"If you are choosing where to relocate your family, you may be interested to know that a certain township has a benefit for veterans," she said.

The relevance of information in the National Resource Directory goes far beyond solely wounded illness, injury, and recovery services, Davis said. Many of the sections are very useful to any servicemember and their family, she noted.

"We have already had several other programs wanting to connect and use the directory, especially in the area of benefits and compensation," Davis said. "Here, you will find not only what's available through the DoD Disability Evaluation System and the VA disability compensation programs, but things like Social Security benefits, life insurance and video libraries. ... We have sections on how to file claims, on unemployment benefits, and benefits for retirees."

In addition to the directory's Web site - [www.nationalresourcedirectory.org](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org) -- a toll-free phone number, 800-342-9647, is available.

The Web site is expanding, Davis said, and visitors can suggest additional programs by clicking on "Suggest a Resource."

Launched Nov. 17, the site already has received a lot of positive feedback, she said.

"We had a very enthusiastic response in San Diego when we started the site," Davis said. "We found that a lot of organizations feel the need for this, and they have been trying to develop one on their own. In fact, we were excited today to find that there was a story of the directory being covered in the Netherlands."

"We have servicemembers throughout the nation and around the world and we hope that this directory can serve as a global tool for anyone supporting wounded servicemembers and their families."

## Say "Thank You" To Someone with a US Army Freedom Team Salute Commendation!



WASHINGTON - Our Army is doing a tremendous job defending America's freedom.

However, our success depends on strong supporters standing with us as we fight the Global

War on Terrorism. I encourage you to take the time to say "Thank You" to those special individuals that help us accomplish our duties.

The U.S. Army's Freedom Team Salute program was initiated by the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff to provide all currently serving Soldiers a sincere, heartfelt way to recognize their Parents and Spouses for their support and sacrifice. Guard and Reserve Soldiers can also recognize their Employers during these trying times. Additionally, anyone can honor the millions of discharged U.S. Army Veterans who served with distinction; and, other Army Supporters, who continue to make significant contributions to the Army's mission (for example, a Soldier's child or other relative, a Family Readiness Group Leader, or an active community member, etc.).

Those honored will receive a personalized letter of thanks and certificate of appreciation signed by the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army; an official Army lapel pin; and, Army decals. The entire commendation package is prepared and mailed at no cost to either you or the recipient.

Honoring someone is quick and easy. Simply visit the U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute website at [www.FreedomTeamSalute.com](http://www.FreedomTeamSalute.com) and complete an online commendation form. For additional information or assistance, please contact Freedom Team Salute at [info@FreedomTeamSalute.com](mailto:info@FreedomTeamSalute.com).

## Service Programs Strive to Strengthen Military Marriages, Curb Divorce

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON -

Servicemembers and their spouses are flocking to a broad array of programs to help them strengthen their family relationships as the services step up efforts to curb divorce rates.

Military divorce rates rose by .1 percent -- to 3.4 percent -- during fiscal 2008, with 492 more divorces than the previous year,

Army Lt. Col Les' Melnyk, a Pentagon spokesman, reported. Military-wide, 25,750 marriages ended in divorce last year.

The Marine Corps, with 3,077 divorces last year, experienced the biggest increase, from 3.3 percent in fiscal 2007 to 3.7 percent.

The Army rate also increased -- to 3.5 percent -- with 10,200 divorces last year. The Army reported a 3.3 percent rate in fiscal 2007, with 9,134 divorces.

Meanwhile, divorce rates dropped .2 percent last year in the Navy and remained stable in the Air Force. The Navy reported a 3 percent rate in fiscal 2008, with 5,441 divorces representing a 618 decrease from the previous year's number.

The Air Force reported a 3.5 percent divorce rate in both fiscal 2007 and 2008, but the actual number of divorces dropped by 618 -- to 7,032.

Comparing these statistics to civilian divorce rates is difficult, officials said, but most sources agree that about 50 percent of first marriages end in divorce in the United States. The highest incidence of civilian divorces is within the 20- to 29-year-old population, which also makes up the largest percentage of the military.

Recognizing the hardships military life often imposes -- and the challenges it can place on family relationships -- the military services are working to buck societal trends through a full range of outreach programs. The programs are offered through the services' family support, chaplain and mental health counseling networks and range from support groups for spouses of deployed troops to weekend retreats for military couples.

The Army program, the largest, aims to build resiliency in soldiers -- 58 percent of them married -- and the families who stand by them, Lt. Col. George Wright, an Army spokesman, told American Forces Press Service.

The programs focus on communication, intimacy and conflict management, which research shows increases marriage satisfaction and reduces marital challenges.

"Military families have to adjust to more transitions than the typical family," Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Carleton Birch, from the Army's Chief of Chaplains Office, said. "These programs strengthen the bonds that build resiliency in Army families."

The centerpiece of the Army program is "Strong Bonds," a program initiated by commanders and led by chaplains that helps soldiers and their families build strong relationships. Strong Bonds has four parts: a general couples program, programs tailored for couples preparing for or returning from deployments, and programs for families and single soldiers.

Much of the training is provided in a retreat-style format so soldiers and their

families can get away from their daily routines "to focus on their important relationships," Wright said.

Participation in the program has doubled every year since the program started five years ago, Birch reported. So far, more than 60,000 couples have participated in the training.

The National Institutes of Health, which recently completed the first year of a five-year study evaluating the program's effectiveness in building family resiliency, found "encouraging early results," Birch said.

Meanwhile, an attendee gave a full-fledged endorsement of the program's value after attending a recent Strong Bonds session at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"This is the first time since getting back from Iraq in April where I have felt that I am capable as well as confident enough to lead my family in a loving and caring environment," he said. "The tools that I have learned will serve us a lifetime. This should be mandatory training for all married couples."

While praising the benefits these programs offer families, officials said they recognize that strong marital and family relationships make better soldiers.

It also has an important impact on a soldier's decision to re-enlist, Birch said. Quoting other Army leaders, he said, "The Army recruits soldiers, but it retains families."

Soldiers or their spouses interested in attending a marriage retreat can contact their local chaplain or visit their website at [www.strongbonds.org](http://www.strongbonds.org).

## Changes to Leave Act Benefit Wounded Warriors, Families

By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Recent changes to the Family and Medical Leave Act will extend the period of unpaid, job-protected leave that eligible family members can take to care for

wounded warrior spouses, Labor Department officials said.

Legislative amendments to the act signed into law by President Bush provide new entitlements that pertain to military families and enable them to take caregiver leave, officials said.

The Labor Department administers FMLA for private-sector workers. The changes, authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, are

slated to be published in the Federal Register Nov. 17.

"This final rule, for the first time, gives America's military families special job-protected leave rights to care for brave servicemen and women who are wounded or injured, and also helps families of members of the National Guard and reserves manage their affairs when their servicemember is called up for active duty," Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao said.

"At the same time, the final rule provides needed clarity about general FMLA rights and obligations for both workers and employers," she said.

One change stipulates that eligible employees who are family members of covered servicemembers can take up to 26 work weeks of leave in a 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of duty on active duty. This change extends the period of available unpaid leave beyond the original 12-week leave period. The new provision was a recommendation of the President's Commission on Wounded Warriors.

A second family-leave-related amendment to the act makes the normal 12 work weeks of FMLA job-protected leave available to certain family members of National Guardsmen or reservists for qualifying exigencies when servicemembers are on active duty or called to active-duty status.

Qualifying exigencies for which employees can use FMLA leave include:

- ❖ Short-notice deployment;
- ❖ Military events and related activities;
- ❖ Child-care and school activities;
- ❖ Financial and legal arrangements;
- ❖ Counseling;
- ❖ Rest and recuperation;
- ❖ Post-deployment activities, and
- ❖ Additional activities not encompassed in the other categories by which the employer and employee can agree to the leave.

Another change requires employees to follow their employers' call-in procedures when taking FMLA leave. Previous rules were interpreted that employees could inform employers of taking FMLA leave for up to two full business days after initiating it.

Another rule change allows employers' human-resource officials, leave administrators or management officials to contact employees' health care providers to verify information on medical certification forms, so long as Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 requirements and medical privacy regulations are met.

Established in 1993 under the Labor Department's jurisdiction, the FMLA origi-

nally entitled most federal employees to up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for:

- ❖ The birth of a child of the employee and the care of the child;
- ❖ The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- ❖ The care of a spouse, child or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition; or
- ❖ A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to work.

## "FREE" MONEY FOR EDUCATION



WASHINGTON - Army Emergency Relief (AER) is now accepting applications for two different scholarship programs.

First, the Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Program is for dependent children of Active, Retired and Deceased Soldiers and scholarships are based on financial need, academics and leadership/achievement.

To be eligible, applicants must maintain a cumulative GPA of a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale; be full time undergraduate students for the entire academic year at a school accredited by the U.S. Department of Education; and be dependents of a Soldier on federal active duty, a retiree, or a deceased active or retired Soldier. To be a dependent you must be under the age of 23, registered in DEERS and unmarried for the entire academic year.

The 2009-2010 Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Program Application will be available on AER's web site, [www.aerhq.org](http://www.aerhq.org) starting December 1, 2008 and will be due on March 2, 2009.

Hardcopy applications may be requested by contacting Mrs. Kasey Phillips at 703-428-0035, [kasey@erhq.org](mailto:kasey@erhq.org) or by mail to: HQ, Army Emergency Relief, Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Program, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0600.

Second, the Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program (SSEAP) is a need-based education assistance program designed to provide spouses of active duty and retired Soldiers, and widows(ers) of Soldiers who died either on active duty or in a retired status, and residing in the United States, with financial assistance in pursuing educational goals. The purpose of the program is to assist spouses/widows(ers) in gaining the education required to allow them to qualify for increased occupational opportunities.

To be eligible, applicants must maintain a cumulative GPA of a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale; be full time undergraduate students for the entire academic year at a school accredited by the U.S. Department of Education; and be dependents of a Soldier on federal active duty, a retiree, or a deceased active or retired Soldier. To be a dependent you must be registered in DEERS.

The 2009-2010 Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program Application will be available on the AER web site, [www.aerhq.org](http://www.aerhq.org) starting December 1, 2008 and will be due on March 2, 2009.

Hardcopy applications may be requested by contacting Mrs. Diann Evans at 703-325-2091, [diann@erhq.org](mailto:diann@erhq.org) or by mail to: HQ, Army Emergency Relief, Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0600.

The 2009-2010 Student Aid Report (SAR) is needed for both the MG James Ursano Scholarship Program and the Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program. The process to obtain the SAR is started by submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). After analyzing the data on the FAFSA, the Student Aid Report (SAR) is produced and sent to the applicant. Since AER is not an education institution, we will not receive a copy of the SAR unless the applicant mails us a copy after they receive their copy.

For more information on AER scholarships, please contact AER HQS at the numbers mentioned above or visit [www.aerhq.org](http://www.aerhq.org).

## Reduced Retirement for Reserve Component



WASHINGTON - Reserve Soldiers can now earn credit towards a faster retirement, if activated to support the Global War on Terrorism, thanks to new laws amending Title 10, section 12731 of the United States Code.

Section 647 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2008, enacted on January 28, 2008, reduces the retirement age for Reserve Component Soldiers from 60 to a lesser age, not less than 50, for those who have served on active duty in an eligible **status on or after January 28, 2008**. The change is not and was not grandfathered. If a Soldier is called to active duty for the express purpose of the Global War on Terrorism or its derivatives, on or after January 28, 2008, each day on that active duty tour counts towards a retirement age reduction.

See Section 647 of the NDAA for eligibility requirements.



**US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense  
US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases**

LISAMRIID Chemical Casualty Care Division  
3100 Hicketts Point Road, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5400  
Commercial Phone: 410-136-2290 Fax: 410-136-3086 DSN: 684-2230  
<https://ccc.apgee.army.mil>

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15-20 March 2009

3-8 May 2009

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Summer 2009

*CME/CEU credits are available!*

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

See your training officer, NCO for the availability of funds and training days if you interested in attending these courses. Contact the schools directly, at the number above, for more information.

**2009 Deemed "Year of Non Commissioned Officer" by DA.**



**From the Desk of the CSM:**

Leaders,

DA has opened the door for us to tell our story. Energize your folks to get some articles, photos, etc. put together and submitted for publication. This would be a great project for one (or more) of your junior / mid grade NCOs. 2009: The Year of The NCO; Lets show them we have some Great NCOs!

**ROGER B. SCHULZ  
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR**



**From the Desk of the PAO:**

Leaders,

We want to market at least two stories a month in 2009 about our outstanding NCOs, but we need your help.

If you have an outstanding NCO who truly stands out in your unit or within the community, contact us at

[ARMEDCOMPAO@usar.army.mil](mailto:ARMEDCOMPAO@usar.army.mil)

We will need their name, unit, contact information (phones, address and email) as well as a short paragraph explaining why you feel they deserve some publicity for the work they are doing at home, school, work, in the community or as an outstanding NCO.

PAO will contact the NCO, draft an article and or news release about them and market their story in their hometown news outlets as well as other media avenues.

Please ensure the NCO is aware that you are recommending them for a feature story and that they are not "camera shy".

**MAJ. WILLIAM RITTER  
CHIEF, PUBLIC AFFAIRS,**

**Happy Holidays  
from the  
Public Affairs  
Office**

Look for the next "Warrior Medic" Magazine in the mail, late January, early February 2009.

**WHAT'S YOUR ARMY STORY?**

**Do you have a unique mission? Are you training on new equipment? Do you have an upcoming training event? Do you have an outstanding Citizen-Soldier in your ranks? Are you training in a Joint or International environment?**

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The goal of the Army Reserve Medical Command's Public Affairs Office is to feature stories that represent units from all over the country. We are always seeking stories that would be of interest to our readers. Contributions are welcome. Story ideas as well as written articles and photos for consideration should be submitted to [ARMEDCOMPAO@usar.army.mil](mailto:ARMEDCOMPAO@usar.army.mil), or call 1-877-891-3281, extensions 3730.