IRAQI TOY DRIVE • SUICIDE PREVENTION • MENTORSHOP MATTERS • REAL RUDY

THE BRIDGE

Volume 2, Issue 2 Produced for the 416th Theater Engineer Command Spring 2009

416th ENGINEERS Working Worldwide!

Command Notes

Thanks for the Memories...

Brigadier General Jimmy Fowler, Commanding General

By time you read this article, Maj. Gen. Crandall and I will have completed the Change of Command, and he will have begun what will surely be a great three years as your next commander. Looking back, there is little doubt that these past four years as your Deputy Commanding General, and then as your Commanding General, have been without doubt, very personally rewarding and the highpoint of my military career. It has also been a great time for the 416th as well, as together we have transitioned to a Theater Engineer Command(TEC), transforming from a Command having only one subordinate unit with about 600 Soldiers, to more than 100 units with close to 12,000 Soldiers and Civilians throughout twenty-six states in the western United States. I have full faith and confidence that you will provide MG Crandall the support and dedication that you have shown Command Sgt. Maj. Reever and me.

During my tenure here in Darien, we have accomplished some extraordinary feats. The 420th Engineer Brigade Headquarters deployed to Afghanistan, where they successfully supported Operation Enduring Freedom, the 101st Airborne Division as well as the people of Afghanistan.

The 301st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) has emerged from carrier status and their Headquarters successfully completed all the command control functions for Operation Sand Castle.

The 416th TEC Headquarters mobilized and deployed the very first TEC Deployable Command Post (DCP) to Iraq. The DCP has over 70 Soldiers manning and leading the US Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region District (GRD), and its three subordinate Engineer Divisions in Iraq. They are being superbly led by our former commander, Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre.

Please take a moment to pray for the safety of all our other deployed Soldiers as well as their Families. We were honored in 2008 to have the US Army Soldier of the Year come from our ranks as Spc. David Obray, from the 372nd EN BDE, was the very first Army Reserve Soldier to earn the title. With Command Sgt. Maj. Reever's expert guidance and vision, we also held the first ever TEC Noncommissioned Officer Summit in Dallas this past January, which proved to be an extraordinarily successful and a terrific networking and educational event.

Looking forward into 2009 and beyond, all of our units will continue to be called upon to support our numerous mission readiness exercises and overseas deployments, all in an effort to support and win the Global War on Terror. As I depart, I will most miss the great times spent with Soldiers, fellow Engineers and their Families. My wife Debbie and I have always felt warmly welcomed and we well miss this greatly as we move on to the next phase of our lives.

Please feel free to contact me if you ever need any support, as my open door policy will continue. Please do not forget to be safe in everything that you do. Whether on duty or off, all Soldiers should remain vigilant in enforcing safe practices. Remember, everyone is a Safety Officer. And a final request, please tell your Families and loved ones how much they are appreciated for their sacrifices.

THE BRIDGE

Produced for the 416th Theater Engineer Command

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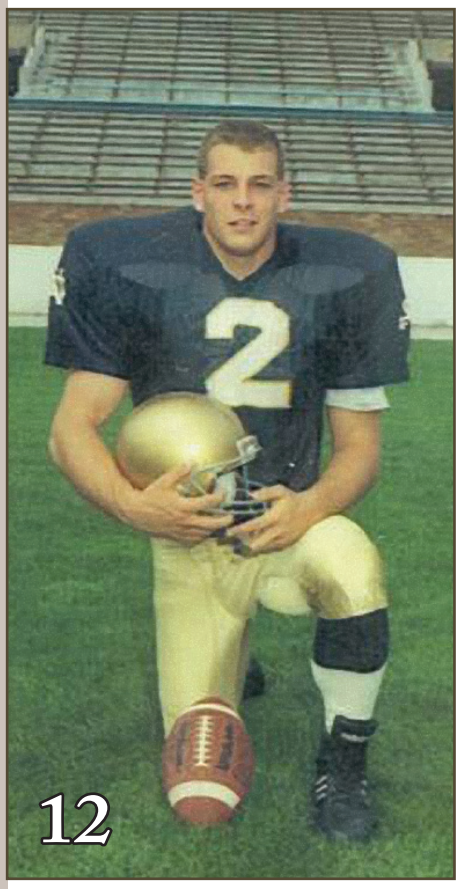
PHOTO BY NORRIS JONES



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TOP: Iraqi students are all smiles about the new toys donated to them by co-workers of deployed Army reserve soldier Maj. Robert Kirkpatrick, Feb. 17.

COVER: CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Pvt. Curtis Nordby of Pineville, La., 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, rips boards from a rotting shade structure located on top of the engineer's headquarters building on Camp Victory, Feb. 7. The engineers, responsible for mobility and engineering effects in the area.

Around the Command

USACE PHOTOS BY NORRIS JONES

Top: Members of the 416th Engineer Command are deployed to Gulf Region Division South District and spent Christmas away from family as they supported a mission of helping rebuild Iraq. Stateside friends and organizations sent a variety of care packages to give some holiday joy to everyone.

PHOTO BY KENDAL SMITH

PHOTO BY COURTNEY WITTMANN

(TOP) Warrant Officer Alton Spencer (center), Officer in Charge of Central District's Victory South Resident Office waits in line for an authentic Iraqi buffet which featured mazgoof, an Iraqi specialty, served at Central District HQ near Baghdad.

(LEFT) Lt. Col. Reginald Truss, U.S. Army Reserves, 416th Engineer Command, presents his little brother, Staff Sgt. Redus Thomas, Chicago Recruiting Battalion, with his second Purple Heart during the Chicago Bulls Veterans Day game. Thomas received his latest Purple Heart when his truck struck an improvised explosive device in Iraq Oct. 19, 2005. Thomas returned to his burning and exploding truck 3 times while wounded to pull his fellow soldiers to safety. Two of those soldiers died of their injuries.

Command Sgt. Maj. Larry E. Reever

Leaders Mentorship Matters Most

Mentoring is an ongoing practice not limited to formal sessions

Mentoring can take place when and where it is needed...

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JEFFREY DURAN

The majority of the Soldiers who have met me or know me are aware of how I feel about taking care of Soldiers.

The duties and responsibilities of a First Line Leader (FLL) are numerous and exhausting at times but the end results are rewarding beyond explanation.

The First Line Leader is the Specialist or Sergeant who calls his or her Soldiers during the month to see how they are doing and to inform them of any changes or updates that have occurred.

The FLL is responsible for the growth, development, and direction of their subordinate Soldiers.

The First Line Leader is a mentor.

In DA Pam 600-25 Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Guide it describes Noncommissioned Officers mentorship as follows:

The goal of mentorship is to assist lesser experienced Soldiers in reaching their personal and professional potential.

Mentoring requires taking advantage of every opportunity to teach, counsel, or coach to build skills and confidence in the mentored Soldier.

Mentoring is not limited to formal sessions, but can include every event from opportunity training to after actions reviews and causal recreational activities.

Every Battle Assembly that we have during the year will have an impact on the Soldiers in our Command.

A First Line Leader must do his or her best to keep their Soldiers energized, feel wanted and have ownership for the unit. They should involve Soldiers in the decision making processes that affect them.

Leaders should hold after action reviews with their subordinate Soldiers and ask them how the Battle Assembly went and get their honest feed back.

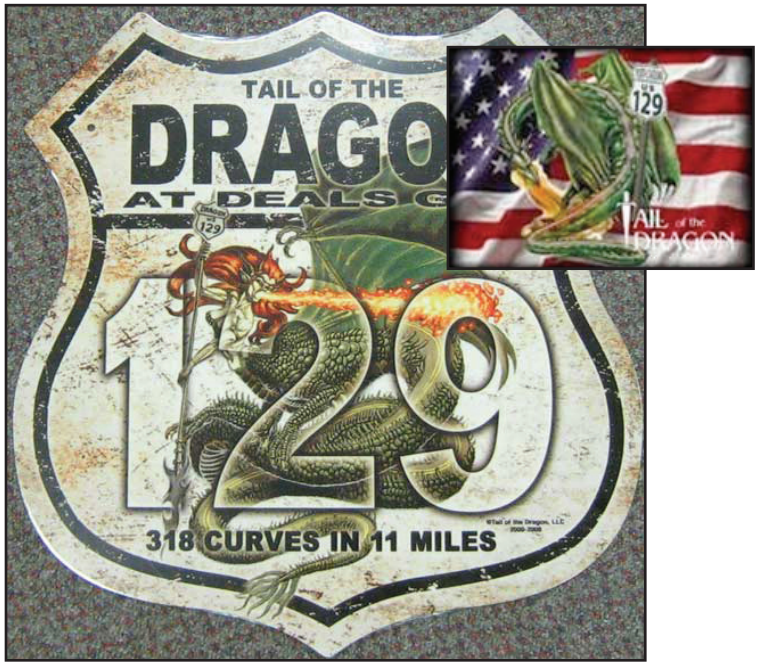
The subordinate Soldier also plays a vital role in the success of the unit as well.

Soldiers must be accountable for their actions, come to Battle Assembly on time, be in the proper uniform, and assist the First Line Leader in accomplishment of the mission.

When I talk to our Active Duty counterparts and they tell me that they can no longer distinguish between the AC component and the reserve component I know that our leadership is working.

The goal of mentorship is to assist lesser experienced Soldiers in reaching their personal and professional potential.

Motorcycle Mentorship Program



Motorcycle Mentorship gives new riders confidence and provides a safer learning environment.

The 416th TEC announced the founding of the TEC RYDERZ Motorcycle Mentorship Program (MMP) in October 2008.

The purpose of the MMP is to encourage riders to exercise mentor¬ship of our most experienced riders with those that are new to the sport. The most important thing MMP stresses is SAFETY.

At the first meeting officers were elected for our Chapter and Maj. Adonis Basto was voted in as President.

The first scheduled ride to mark the end of the Chicago winter season is the Tail of the Dragon.

The "Tail" is on US 129 starting just outside of Maryville, Tenn. The road is only 11 miles long, but contains 318 curves.

It promises to be one of the most challenging rides the Ryderz have ever done, either individually or in a group.

The ride is currently scheduled to leave out of Darien, IL on May 21, 2009 and return to the area on May 26th.

Anyone interested should con¬tact Major Basto or Sgt. First Class Preetorius. Anyone can attend, but as it is the riding season it will become increasingly difficult to obtain lodging.

We will register for a bunkhouse at the Iron Horse Motorcycle Lodge. The bunkhouse sleeps 5 and costs $25 per bed per night.

Future newsletters will be found in the Bridge. We would like to hear and get a little background on your chapter to share with the rest of the Command.

If you haven't started a Chapter, please contact Maj. Adonis Basto for information on starting your own chapter.

We all have our own reasons for riding, but the one reason we should NOT be riding for is street racing. Have fun, but BE SAFE!

-Maj. Adonis Basto is the owner of a 2003 Harley Springer and custom chopper made by Ultra Motorcycle Company. Basto has been riding for years, starting when he was 10. His very first motorcycle was a Honda QA 50.

- Steve McGlumphy was elected as the Vice President. Steve has been riding for years. He currently rides a Honda VTX.

-Sgt. 1st Class Cliff Preetorius is the Secretary/Historian for the Club. I've been riding since I was 8 years old. My first motorcycle was a Honda QA 50.

- Spc. Erin Hall is our Public Affairs, she's never owned a motorcycle, but is planning on buying a Suzuki 600.

- Sgt. Victor Vargas is our Webmaster (under development). He's been riding since he was 25. His first bike was a Suzuki 650. He's currently riding a Yamaha V-Star Classic.

U.S. ARMY
FIRES

Reservist Leads Toy Drive for Iraqi Children

by Norris Jones
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Central

TALLIL AIR BASE, Iraq - When Maj. Robert Kirkpatrick, an Army reservist here, answered the requests of friends and co-workers back home in Illinois about what they could send him during his deployment, his thoughts went to the children living near here in southern Iraq.

Kirkpatrick, a member of the 416th Theater Engineer Command based in Darien, Ill., said he received numerous e-mails from home asking what he needs since he deployed in November. He suggested sending toys that he and others with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers could deliver to neighboring Iraqi schools.

Kirkpatrick's friends and co-workers at Aux Sable Liquid Products in Channahon, Ill., where he is a senior product engineer, responded by sending him a couple of large boxes containing "a great variety of nice toys," including cars, dolls, stuffed animals, a big fire engine, colorful sleeping bags, pillows and a CD player, he said.

"It's a great company to work for, and they've been very supportive of my deployment here," noted Kirkpatrick, who has 23 years of military service.

About 30 Iraqi students from Nasiriyah's Mama Suna Primary School arrived at the Corp's Gulf Region South headquarters beaming with huge smiles. The children held flowers, which they presented to the Americans who greeted them. They sang a song in English that started, "Father, mother, I am sick – get the doctor quick, quick, quick," recited their ABCs, and then sang a song in Arabic.

The Gulf Region South staff greeted the youngsters alongside members of the 3rd Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery, from Fort Bliss, Texas, and the 445th Civil Affairs from Mountain View, Calif. They grilled hamburgers, served pizza, played games with the children and then presented each child with a toy, a soccer ball and a book bag filled with school supplies.

Kirkpatrick, an operations officer, said he joined the Army to get more focused on his future. "I went from being a poor high school student to being a much better college student after three years [of] active duty," he said.

He later joined the National Guard and then switched to the Army reserve. In the past two decades, he has seen much of the world, including Panama, El Salvador and Germany. This is his third tour to Iraq in the past five years.

"Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a great assignment," he said. "We have an important mission. Things are improving here, and you can see that the Iraqis are on the right path. It's encouraging."

Those improvements are due in large part to the Army Corps of Engineers, which is overseeing more than 130 construction projects in Iraq's nine southern provinces. The projects include new schools, hospitals, courthouses, roads, bridges and new water treatment facilities that in some cases are providing communities with access to clean water for the first time ever.

Besides feeling good about his work, Kirkpatrick said, his deployment has been made easier by the support of loved ones back home.

"I've had great support from my family, friends, and co-workers in Illinois since deploying in November," he said. "Through phone calls, emails, and letters, we're able to stay in touch. They've all stepped up and are helping fill in for me stateside so I can concentrate on my duties here. I sincerely appreciate all they do."

Mississippi Engineers Clean Up Baghdad's Streets

By Sgt. Catherine Graham
890th Eng. Bn., 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Soldiers from the 688th Mobility Augmentation Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 926th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division - Baghdad search the busy streets of Baghdad for rubbish and explosive devices during a routine route sanitation mission Feb 7.

BAGHDAD - For the 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Eng. Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, supporting the counterinsurgency efforts with route clearance is not the only skill that they brought with them to Iraq.

The National Guard unit from Gulfport, Miss., supported the lower Mississippi delta with hurricane relief since their inception in 1953. Hurricane Katrina, one of the most devastating hurricanes in history, gave them extensive experience of restoring the environment after a disaster.

So when 890th Eng. Bn. was tasked to perform route clearance this deployment; not restoration, it collaborated with the 46th Engineer Battalion, a sister battalion tasked with construction, to create joint-route sanitation missions.

"Route sanitation is integral to our mission as a whole. It is the primary objective of the 890th (Eng. Bn.) to remove opportunities for enemy exploitation," said Maj. Rick Weaver, operations officer for the 890th Eng. Bn. "We have been successful in the area by removing threats and the conditions that favor IED emplacement."

It was the vision that route clearance and route sanitation should go hand in hand to support the same outcome. While route clearance removes the improvise explosive device threat for Coalition Forces and the community, route sanitation or cleaning the rubbish from the streets and medians, help remove material that can be used as concealment for roadside bombs. Both activities lessen the effectiveness of terrorists in Baghdad and improve the conditions of Iraqi communities.

On average, the 890th Eng. Bn. conducts four cooperative sanitation missions a week with construction assets from the 46th Eng. Bn. To date, the 890th Eng. Bn. has directed and overseen 72 successful route sanitation missions that help clean up the streets of Baghdad, said Weaver.

"Our efforts can be seen all over the Baghdad area, everyone benefits from the combined missions that our battalion directs. Our Soldiers are proud to be able to support the local government in making the surroundings normal again as we did the Mississippi Gulf Coast after Katrina."

The Real Rudy is in the USAFEG

Maj. Curtis L. Decker

One of the things I like best about being in the Army Reserve is the great people you get to meet. For me, one of these people is my friend and colleague, Major Craig Lanigan, who is an inspiration to me and everyone in the US Army Facility Engineer Group (USAFEG). Major Lanigan is the S-4 for the USAFEG and ensures that all of our Teams have their logistical needs met for deployments, exercises, and all other operational requirements.

Major Lanigan fulfilled his dream and that of every Catholic boy in the United States by playing football for Notre Dame, not bad for a young Lutheran lad from Oak Lawn, Illinois. Major Lanigan played tight end for Illinois power house Richards High School. He was not heavily recruited for college football, though he did receive some attention from Division II and III schools. Even before the making of the movie "Rudy," Major Lanigan plotted a course that would lead him to play football for the fighting Irish. Like Rudy, he enrolled in Holy Cross Junior College and for two years lifted weights and prepared himself mentally and physically to try out for the neighboring Notre Dame football squad. Even though he had not played football for two years, Major Lanigan never doubted that he would fulfill his dream.

Major Lanigan did make the team and for three years played fullback for the scout team that challenged Notre Dame's starting defense every practice. So, for three years, the likes of football greats Chris Zorich and Bryant Young physically punished Major Lanigan in practice. For a time, he also played along side running back Jerome Bettis on the scout team and for the full three years under the tutelage of legendary coach Lou Holtz. He did all of this while also participating in the Notre Dame Army ROTC program.

Fortunately, Major Lanigan had the privilege to travel as a member of the team to the Sugar Bowl and two Orange Bowls. Overall, he got to play in six games, mostly on special teams. Major Lanigan's career statistics as a running back for Notre Dame include two carries for a total of nine yards and one fumble. Many avid Notre Dame fans remember Major Lanigan's fumble to this day that occurred in a game against Southern Methodist University in 1989. It is perhaps one of the most famous and unusual fumbles in the team's history.

Notre Dame led SMU by some fifty points. Major Lanigan and many other back-up players had been put into the game. Not wanting to run up the score, Lou Holtz called together the offense and told them not to score any more points. Notre Dame players were intentionally running out of bounds and falling down to avoid gaining yardage. On Major Lanigan's second and final career carry, he fumbled the ball, though not intentionally. However, the fans and even the newspapers and announcers did not see it that way and to this day his fumble is remembered because everyone thought that he did it on purpose to avoid scoring.

It is actually Major Lanigan's musical ability which gave him the most notoriety on the Fighting Irish football team. The team held an annual talent show, and Major Lanigan stunned teammates and coach Lou Holtz with his ability to play the piano. Lou Holtz could always remember Major Lanigan's name because of his musical performance. The other scout team players often joked that they wish they could play the piano so that the coach would know their name.

Growing up in the late seventies and early eighties, Major Lanigan was not interested, like his friends, in the tacky pop music of the era. Rather, like his father, he developed a love for "Big Band" music and Frank Sinatra. His mother was a good pianist and Craig started

See RUDY, page 19

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – "Cobra" Soldiers of the 848th Engineer Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, prepare to lift a battle buddy to safety during casualty evacuation drills Feb. 16. The 848th Eng. Co., based out of Douglas, Ga., continue to focus and train for their route clearance mission despite nearing the end of their Iraq tour.

'Cobra' Engineers Never Let Up

By 1st Lt. Benjamin Roberts, 890th Eng. Bn., 926th Eng. Bde.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Sappers from 848th Engineer Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, stay on top of their game by continuously conducting battle drills and rehearsals of situations they may face while conducting route clearance missions in Feb. 16.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Soldiers of the 848th Engineer Company, know the importance of staying focused on their mission and the evolving relationship between Coalition Forces and the Government of Iraq.

Understanding the dynamic environment in which they work, "Cobra" engineers, based out of Douglas, Ga., execute daily missions and training to stay on the fight's leading edge.

With the implementation of the Security Agreement, signed in Jan. 1, the Soldiers see their route clearance missions as considerably more valuable to the Iraqi population. Now, they hunt for and clear roadways of improvised explosive devices not only for Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, but more importantly, for the Iraqi public.

The Security Agreement set strict guidelines for U.S. Forces operating in Iraq and requires increased partnership between the Coalition and ISF. Each "Cobra" Soldier understands that every action has a direct impact on the trust the Iraq people place in the ISF and GOI, places professional conduct high on their list.

"It's the small stuff that builds trust among the local Iraqis, and by empowering the ISF, the people see their guys out there working for them," explained 1st Lt. Jason Clark, from Marietta, Ga.

Enemy IED attacks pose an ever-present threat to route clearance patrols, and work as a team to overcome potential obstacles. The company depends on rehearsals to keep their Soldiers' decision making process sharp and reinforce the Security Agreements rules.

"Rehearsals are a key part of keeping the Soldiers focused in what they do on a regular basis, it's all about keeping them on their toes" said Sgt. 1st Class James McMillan, a platoon sergeant with 848th Eng. Co. and a native of Waycross, Ga.

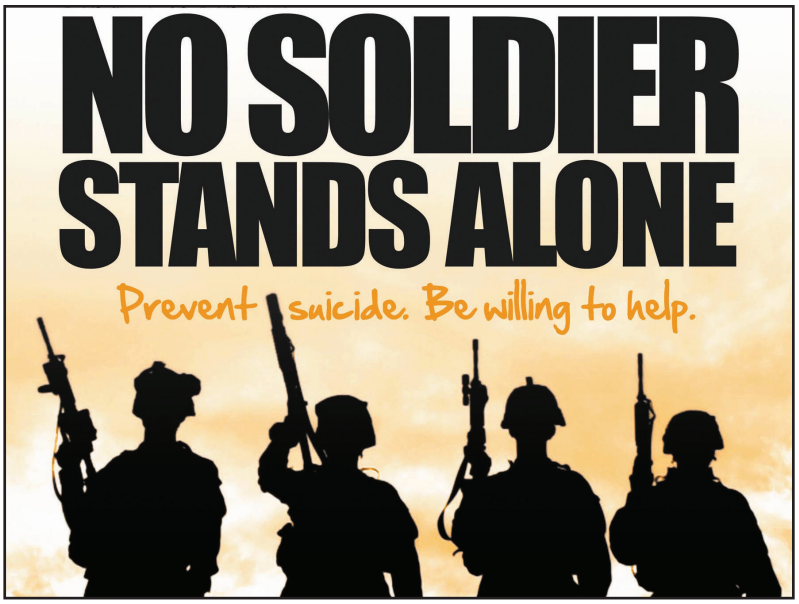
It's the confidence and teamwork derived from these battle drills that keep the "Cobras" going, despite the dangers they may face.

"It's nice to know that if I ever get in a bind, the rest of my platoon is able to react and get me out safely and quickly," said Spc. Neil Brunnel, mine clearing vehicle operator from Douglas, Ga. "I believe that rehearsals are just as important as any other thing that we do because you have to be prepared for anything to happen. By rehearsing, you learn how to react quickly and have a better chance of success."

Chaplain (Col.) Timothy M. Samorajski

Suicide Prevention And Awareness

A common myth is that most suicides are impulsive acts with few if any warning signs.



To mark Army/Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Week, the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine added a new poster to its line-up of educational materials for Soldiers, leaders and Family members.

DESIGNED BY ETHEL KEFAUVER, CHPPM. PHOTO OF POSTER BY BEN BUNGER, CHPPM

Encourage the hurting person to tell their story the way they need to tell it."

I still have a very vivid memory of a television commercial I watched as a kid in which a cartoon figure of a brown bear made the statement, "Only you can prevent forest fires." It made a simple but profound point that the avoidance of tragedy needs everyone.

Clearly, this applies to the topic of suicide prevention and awareness.

You can make a difference! You can save a life! In Genesis 4:9, Cain asks God in a fit of sarcasm, "Am I my brother's keeper?" In a sense, this is a question we all need to ask and we all need to answer.

Do I care enough to help someone who's hurting? Am I willing to give up some time? To change my schedule? To miss an important meeting or appointment because a friend has a need that won't wait until tomorrow?

In Luke 10, Jesus makes the point that it was the despised Samaritan who proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers hands because when he came upon him, "he felt compassion… and bandaged his wounds and poured healing oil and wine on them."

WARNING SIGNS

A common myth is that most suicides are impulsive acts with few if any warning signs. In reality, the opposite is true. Research shows that about 80% of successful suicides gave some type of warning signs first. What are these warning signs? What should someone listen for?

Statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," or "You won't be seeing me around anymore" are obvious indications of serious trouble. At other times, the tipoff of a problem involves strange or unusual behavior. Examples include giving away prized possessions, the purchase of a gun or a sudden interest in organizing business or personal matters.

Someone who's severely depressed or who has recently experienced a significant loss in their life are other areas of concern.

INTERVENTIONS

At this point you might wonder, "Just how exactly can I help?" Start off by asking an open ended question such as, " It really seems like you've got a lot on your mind, could we talk for awhile?"

After that, practice the fine art of listening. Encourage the hurting person to tell their story the way they need to tell it. Encourage disclosure by statements such as, "I think I'm starting to understand, could you say some more about that? Hurting people want to talk and need some one to listen. Phase I of the Army's current Suicide stand down training provides a useful tool at this point by using the ACE memory aide.

- Ask your buddy. After listening quietly to the story, it's important to ask direct questions. For example, "Are you hurting enough to take

See PREVENT, next page

Sgt. 1st Class Steve Lee, Command Career Counselor

Handling Your Non-Participants

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JEFFREY DURAN (PHOTO HAS BEEN ALTERED TO CHANGE NAMETAPE)

Consider the non-participant – the bane of every commander and first sergeant! What a dirt bag! Right?

Non-Participants are your responsibility

Let's analyze this "dirt bag." This is the same Soldier that displayed the patriotism and motivation to raise the right hand and swear before God to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies.

This is the same Soldier who bravely exposed himself at MEPS to be poked, prodded, and examined by strangers.

This is the same Soldier who struggled through basic training and proudly graduated eight grueling weeks later. This is the same Soldier who developed a useful skill in advanced individual training hoping to contribute this new skill to the service of the country sworn to support and defend. This patriotic, motivated, brave, tenacious, proud, and eager Soldier now stands down as a non-participant. What (under heaven) happened? Are we to assume that this Soldier failed his country and should be punished with separation under other than honorable conditions? Did this Soldier fail his country? Or did the country – through lack of first-line care and leadership – fail the Soldier? Given the virtues that went into the making of a Soldier, no Soldier should ever stand down as a non-participant.

> **"All Soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership."**
>
> *– From the Army NCO Creed*

WILL YOU?

If leaders lead and care, Soldiers will soldier! Hearken to the renewed challenge:

- Re-tap into the unique patriotism, motivation, courage, and tenacity that defines a US Soldier.
- Re-visit this Soldier – if it means driving a HMMWV to the residence to make a show of concern and loyalty, do whatever it takes!
- Re-cover this Soldier – bring the Soldier back and provide purpose, direction, and motivation; engaged the Soldier; inspire the Soldier!
- Re-tain this Soldier – As a valuable asset to the unit and to the United States Army Reserve, the Soldier remains essential to National readiness!

As a leader, do not assume that the Soldier is the problem. Look within. Find solutions in ever increasing concentric circles around your own influence and leadership. There are two types of non-participants:

1) the Soldier that doesn't show up for Battle Training Assemblies, and

2) the first-line leader that doesn't participate in caring for this Soldier. Don't be a non-participant in leadership.

Show the Soldier YOU care!

By Maj. Bruce Townshend

Operation Yellow Ribbon Rolls On

Based on a law passed by Congress last summer, Operation Yellow Ribbon brings the subject matter experts for Soldier and Family Support to the units and Soldiers mobilizing instead of the other way around.

PHOTO BY SCOTT FLENNER

By now you have all heard of something called the Operation Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. Known as Yellow Ribbon or even YR2P for short, it's a program developed by the Army to help Soldiers – and their families – through the entire Mobilization/Deployment/Redeployment/Demobilization process.

For the Army Reserve and the 416th TEC, this program is very important as we have units going through just about every phase in the process every day.

The program begins when a unit gets notification of a pending mobilization.

The Yellow Ribbon Team sets up dates to bring in the Soldiers or their families for the first few events of the seven required.

Based on a law passed by Congress last summer, Operation Yellow Ribbon brings the subject matter experts for Soldier and Family Support to the units and Soldiers mobilizing instead of the other way around.

Yellow Ribbon events are designed to be held in major cities or airport hubs for ease in bringing everyone together in one place in hotels with convention facilities.

The first two events concentrate on getting the Soldiers and their families ready for the deployment. These events are a mandatory part of the pre-deployment process and are designed to be held around 90 and 60 days ahead of mobilization.

The Yellow Ribbon Team has members from JAG, Finance and Human Resources on site to get everyone ready to go militarily. But here's where the program really gets to work… the Yellow Ribbon Team also has representatives from Military One Source, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), the Veterans Administration, Family Readiness, Tri-Care and a host of other support networks that each family can use.

Most important of all, the program brings the family members together to either establish or strengthen the Family Support Groups for the unit deploying.

One of the most important aspects of Yellow Ribbon for the reserves is that the program also brings in the Soldiers who have been cross-leveled into a deploying unit, as well as their families, to these events!

Each Soldier can bring up to two family members to these events at government expense.

While the unit is deployed, Yellow Ribbon teams set up support events – the 3rd and 4th of the program – for the family members to attend.

The first is somewhere around 90 days after the unit deploys and the second somewhere around 90 days before it returns.

Like the first two events, two family members of each deployed Soldier are allowed to attend these events.

Once the unit gets back, the Yellow Ribbon Team gets back to work with two more events that bring the Soldiers

See YELLOW, next page

YELLOW *(Continued)*

and their families together with both military and civilian support agencies and sets up assistance to get Soldiers reintegrated with their families and with their civilian careers.

These events are designed to be held approximately 30 and 60 days after redeployment.

The final event is for Soldiers only and is centered on the Post Deployment Health Re-Assessment (PDHRA).

That event is scheduled for at least 90 days after the unit returns.

While Soldiers who have redeployed are given time off from their monthly Battle Assemblies after redeployment, Yellow Ribbon events are mandatory and are covered on orders.

PREVENT *(Continued)*

your life?"

- Care for your buddy. Continue to listen and offer encouragement that things can get better. Ask permission to remove the lethal means if present. For example, removing a bottle of sleeping pills. Remain with your buddy if the threat of suicide is real.
- Escort your buddy. Encourage their cooperation and escort them to where they can get help and be safe.

RESOURCES

- Call 911 if immediate assistance is imperative
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
- Military One Source: 1-800-342-9647 (offers confidential and free counseling services)
- Chain of Command
- Chaplain

CONCLUSION

The loss of one individual to suicide is one to many. The individuals hurting people are close to are the first line of defense in combating this persistent problem. Are you your brother's keeper? Are you ready to save a life?

RUDY *(Continued from Page 12)*

lessons at the age of seven. Major Lanigan was persistent with his development as a pianist. Prior to his deployment to Afghanistan in 2006, he played four nights a week at the famous, upscale restaurant in the Drake Hotel in downtown Chicago. Local celebrities and actors such as Gene Hackman, Harvey Corman, Tim Conway and Will Ferrell have all been entertained by Major Lanigan.

According to Major Lanigan, one of the most significant moments in his life came when he was called up from the Individual Ready Reserve in 2006 to be trained as a Civil Affairs soldier and deployed. He and ten other guys from around the country assembled at Fort Bragg and formed an informal "Band of Brothers" during their three month Civil Affairs train-up. This self-proclaimed Band of Brothers stays in close contact to this day. Unfortunately, of the ten, two of the brothers did not return from Iraq: Captains' Shane Mahaffee and Brian Freeman. Recently, Major Lanigan organized a reunion of the Band of Brothers in California which included the two widows.

Major Lanigan's deployment to Afghanistan interrupted his service as an elected school board member of District 123 in Oak Lawn. According to Major Lanigan, nothing is more important than the education of his children and he wants to be a part of the process that holds schools accountable for their education.

With all of Major Lanigan's accomplishments and interests, nothing is more important to him than his role as father to son Myles and daughter Julia, ages nine and ten respectively. Upon return from deployment, he took four months off of work and spent every single day organizing and participating in family adventures with his children.

Despite Major Lanigan's commitments, he manages to earn his living in a job that he loves as a salesman for heavy construction equipment, working with contractors and engineers on some of the most high-profile projects in the Chicago Loop. Major Lanigan is currently working on writing a script for a movie that he hopes to someday get produced. Those of us who know him in the USAFEG are quite sure that he can do it.

Parting Shot