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Commentary:
The hand
of the most
powerful man
in the world



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
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CAMP VICTORY – Nearly 1,000 service members wait in front of Al Faw Palace April 7 anxiously expecting his arrival – and I am one of them. We came hours earlier, hoping to catch a glimpse and, if we are lucky, shake his hand.

We form a line leading into the palace, not knowing when we will be allowed in or when he will arrive. We anxiously watch the Soldiers providing security, looking for any hint of his arrival. A Soldier standing on a knoll on the other side of the road clears his

throat, belts out 'Fall in!' and we all stream over to get in formation. My heart quickens - he's here.

'Attention!'

The excited chatter and movement stops as we assume the position of attention.

'Present arms!'

The ruffle of uniforms can be heard as every Soldier, Sailor, Marine and Airman renders their best salute.

Ten long seconds later, the motorcade slowly drives down the road directly in front of us. Black vehicles with

darkly-tinted windows roll by, one after the other. I don't know which one he is in, but I get a wave of goose-bumps as each passes. A tear runs down the cheek of a Soldier in front of me.

My chest swells with pride with a realization: I am in Iraq, more than 7,000 miles away from my family, everything I love and the country I am fighting for, surrounded by fellow Americans honoring our commander in chief.

The vehicles pass and we approach

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IG: Soldier's responsibilities in dependent support

Nonsupport of family members is one of the most common complaints we see as IGs. There are a variety of reasons that nonsupport happens, but the Soldier is still responsible to provide support for eligible dependents.

Here are a few of the more common questions we get asked in regards to nonsupport and the answers to them. If you have any further questions regarding support of dependents, you can contact your local IG team or your servicing SJA.

Q. WHAT REGULATION COVERS SUPPORT OF DEPENDENTS?

A. Army Regulation 608-99, Family Support, Child Custody, and Paternity, effective 29 October 2003, sets forth the Department of the Army's policy, responsibilities, and procedures on financial support of family members, child custody and visitation, paternity, and compliance with court orders regarding these and related matters.

Q. WHAT IS A SOLDIER'S OBLIGATION UNDER THE REGULATION?

A. A Soldier's obligation includes:

- Providing adequate and timely support for family members.
- Complying with separation agreements, court orders and judicial orders or decrees.
- Providing DEERS/Tricare enrollment and dependent ID Cards for family members.

Q. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT SOLDIERS ARE INFORMED OF THE ARMY POLICY ON SUPPORT OF FAMILY MEMBERS AND ENFORCING IT?

A. Commanders are responsible for ensuring that Soldiers know about the policy and comply with it.

Q. IF A SOLDIER FAILS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS, WHAT ACTION CAN BE TAKEN?

A. The commander can consider:

- Making it a part of the Soldier's permanent record.
- Denial of reenlistment.
- Punitive or other administrative action including elimination from the service.
- A criminal charge under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

Q. IF THE SOLDIER FAILS TO MEET THE REQUIRE-

MENTS, CAN THE ARMY DEDUCT MONEY FROM THE SOLDIER'S PAY?

A. No. The Army has no legal authority to deduct money from a Soldier's pay without his consent unless garnishment or involuntary allotment has been ordered by a civilian court.

Q. HOW DOES THE COMMANDER DETERMINE ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR FAMILY MEMBERS?

A. The Army requires that Soldiers comply with any court-ordered support.

In the absence of a court order or written agreement and until such an order or agreement is obtained, the Army has established minimum interim support measures for single and multiple family units. This support is payable no later than the 1st of every month for the previous month. This support must also be pro-rated if the Soldier is required to pay support for a partial month. The payment may be made by allotment, direct deposit, money order, check or cash so long as it arrives no later than the 1st of the month. Any such money order or check that is mailed must be mailed directly to the recipient and must be post-marked no later than the 1st of the month.

Q. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF SUPPORT OWED IF THERE IS NO COURT ORDER OR SEPARATION AGREEMENT? WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

A. The Soldier will provide support of an amount equal to his/her Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) entitlements at the "with dependents" rate.

This rate is the BAH-II rate, which is a standard rate the Army determines regardless of where the soldier resides. Current BAH-II rates can be found at: <http://www.defense-travel.dod.mil/pdc-archive/bah/bah2/2009-Non-Locality-BAH-Rates.pdf>.

Q. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF SUPPORT THAT A SOLDIER MUST PROVIDE IF HIS/HER SPOUSE LIVES ON POST IN GOVERNMENT HOUSING?

A. In the absence of a court order, AR 608-99 does not require support to be paid if the family is still in on-post government quarters.

Thanks,
Your IG Team

THE Mountain View

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HAND

From page 1

the gate to be searched before entering the palace. However, after 400 service members enter, the palace is full. A rumbling of disappointment flows through the crowd like a slow-moving storm and reaches me. My heart sinks and I feel as if I've been punched in the stomach. "I'm not going to get to see him," I think.

I realize if I don't do something, I won't make it in. I walk around the crowd of disheartened service members, making my way to the gate. I desperately plead my case to one of the guards. He stares at me sternly as I wait with bated breath. Finally he gives me his answer.

I'm literally the last person allowed in. My heart races – I'm going to get in to see him!

As I walk in, I see everyone corralled in the center of the palace. It's packed. I've been to plenty of crowded concerts, but nothing compares to this. I can't move. I can't see the stage. It's stifling hot and uncomfortable, but I am here.

We wait about 45 minutes. I hear commotion from the other side of the room. Cheering, screaming, clapping and whistling; people are excited to see him.

Standing on my toes, I'm right on the

edge of the crowd in a perfect position to shake his hand. My heart is pounding, the butterflies in my stomach intensifying. I'm nervous, and my hands are sweaty.

I panic. 'I can't shake the president's hand with sweaty hands!' I quickly try in vain to dry them on my uniform.

He finally makes his way around to my side. I see him with my own eyes.

He breaks into a slow jog right past me, not stopping to shake hands or greet us. I feel an unusual mix of excitement about seeing him yet disappointment as he passes by.

He turns one more corner, up the stairs to the stage, and the master of ceremonies announces over the microphone 'Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States, Barack Obama!'

The crowd explodes with noise; the sound of excitement the likes of which I've never heard before. My hair stands on end.

Here, standing before us, is the man so many have placed their hopes and dreams, as well as the promise of a brighter future.

Never in my career have I felt so proud to be an American Soldier.

President Obama stands in front of us and begins his speech. He congratulates us on a job well done, thanks us for our sacrifices and talks about the



progress Iraq is making.

After his remarks, President Obama steps off the stage and begins going around the corral again, greeting service members and shaking hands. He's coming my way – here is my chance. I am still right up against the barrier; prime real-estate to shake his hand.

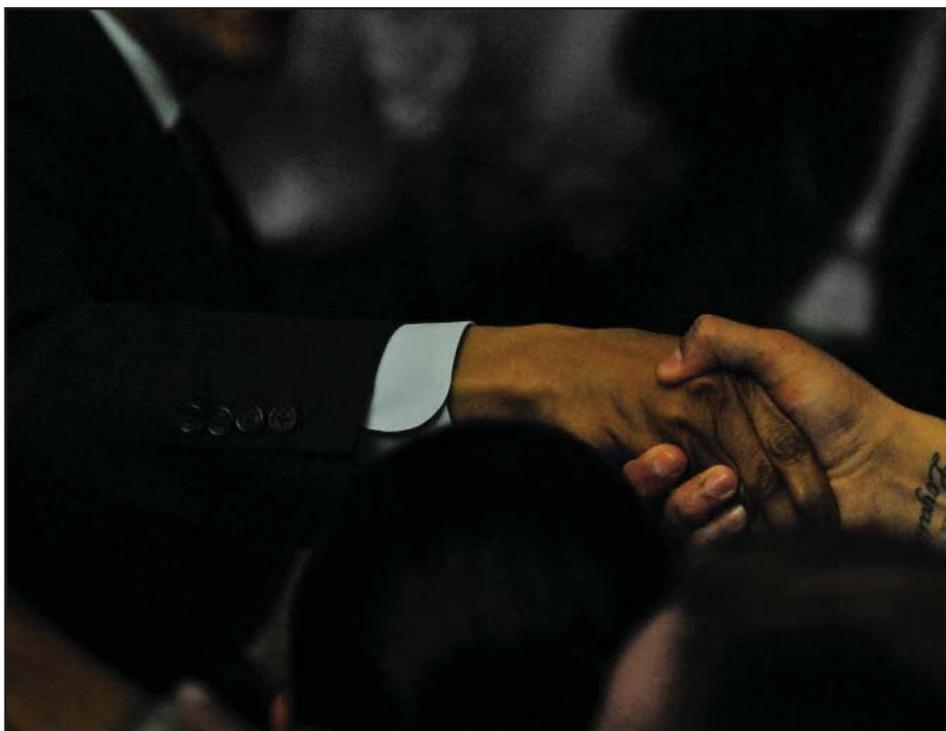
Finally I see him. He's definitely coming to me. It's going to happen. I'm about to shake the president's hand. The anticipation is unbearable.

The excitement of the president's approach jostles the crowd and a Soldier ends up in front of me. I panic. I'm no longer in front of the pack. There is someone in front of me and the president is right there! I can't let this opportunity pass. I'm too close!

I reach over the shoulder of the Soldier in front of me, extending my hand as far as I possibly can. I'm reaching blindly with everything I've got, hoping he grabs my hand.

I feel a hand slip into mine with a firm grip and shake. I muster everything in me to get on my toes to make eye contact.

For a brief second, I do. President Obama's hand is in mine. We lock eyes for a moment and he smiles.



President Barack Obama shakes hands with a Soldier during his surprise first visit to Iraq as president to greet Soldiers April 7. A closer look shows the word 'Loyalty' on the wrist of the Soldier shaking hands with the president.

Headline Round-up

World News:

WASHINGTON - As the Obama administration considers a shift in the half-century policy of isolating Cuba, members of the Congressional Black Caucus returned from Havana saying the Castro brothers are eager to see a new day in U.S.-Cuban relations. Rep. Laura Richardson, D-Calif., one of three lawmakers to meet Fidel Castro April 7, said she got the sense that "he really wants President Obama to succeed" in his foreign policy goals. "He sincerely wants an opportunity, I think, in his lifetime to see a change in America." Richardson was joined by Reps. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., head of the 42-member Congressional Black Caucus, and Bobby Rush, D-Ill., in meeting the 82-year-old Fidel Castro for nearly two hours in his home before the delegation returned to Washington. On April 6, six members of the group talked for four hours with Raul Castro, who replaced his ailing brother as Cuba's president 14 months ago. It was Raul Castro's first encounter with U.S. officials since formally replacing his brother as head of state.

U.S. News:

WASHINGTON - Cyberspies have penetrated the U.S. electrical grid and left behind software programs that could be used to disrupt the system, the Wall Street Journal reported on April 8. The spies came from China, Russia and other countries, and were believed to be on a mission to navigate the U.S. electrical system and its controls, the newspaper said, citing current and former U.S. national security officials. The intruders have not sought to damage the power grid or other key infrastructure but officials said they could try during a crisis or war, the paper said in a report on its website. The espionage appeared pervasive across the United States and does not target a particular company or region, said a former Department of Homeland Security official. "There are intrusions, and they are growing," the former official told the paper, referring to electrical systems. "There were a lot last year." Authorities investigating the intrusions have found software tools left behind that could be used to destroy infrastructure components, the senior intelligence official said. He added, "If we go to war with them, they will try to turn them on." Officials said water, sewage and other infrastructure systems also were at risk.

Quote of the Day

"The best morale exists when you never hear the word mentioned. When you hear it it's usually lousy."
- Dwight D. Eisenhower

Right now the Army is experiencing an unacceptable level of sexual assaults against female Soldiers. For me, one sexual assault is unacceptable - but what is going on here? How do we reduce this trend?

To let the CG and others know, go to the Mountain Sound Off Blog at
www.taskforcemountain.com

AROUND THE COMMUNITY

Camp Victory

April 12

Victory Cigar Social @ 7 p.m.,
Joint Visitors Bureau hotel,
Bldg. 56. Complimentary
Fumar cigars provided.
Monday, Wednesday, Friday
Keep it Movin' Running Club,
5:15 a.m., corner of Echo
Valley Rd. and Williams
Wallace Blvd.

Liberty

April 11

Yung Joc concert Liberty
Stage @ 8:30 p.m.

Fishbowl Gym

April 11

Pirate's Cove Run 5K/10K.
Registration begins @
7 a.m., race begins @ 8
a.m., T-shirts awarded to top
finishers.

Babylon Theater

April 15

Fire Warden Class @ 1 p.m.
Fire Extinguisher Class @
2 p.m.
May 20
Fire Warden Class @ 1 p.m.
Fire Extinguisher Class @
2 p.m.

Freedom Chapel

April 12

Easter Sunrise Service @
6 a.m.
Sundays
Protestant (Traditional) @
10 a.m.
Roman Catholic Mass @
12 p.m.
LDS service @ 2 p.m.
Eastern Orthodox @ 4 p.m.
Protestant (Contemporary) @
12 p.m.
Mondays
A History of Christianity @
7 p.m.
Tuesdays
God & the Military @
6:30 p.m.