

# WARRIOR MEDIC

## MONTHLY

An Army Reserve Medical Command Publication



### Preventing Suicide, Protecting Soldiers



Suicide numbers amongst the military ranks are climbing, and the Army Reserve is working to not only prevent, but also to end soldier suicide. It is your job, as leaders, to be a proactive member of the Soldier Suicide Prevention Campaign. This is NOT business as usual. Combating Soldier suicide is, and should be, a main

priority for every leader.

Just as you would want to protect your soldiers from danger, be it from drunk driving, carelessness, or enemy fire, protecting them from suicide is just as important. Acting quickly, and with the right tools and information, are two key components in fighting this epidemic.

The Specialized Suicide Augmentation Response Team (or SSART, <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/22227962>) is to provide assistance and support to the installation, station, camp and unit Commanders in the event of a cluster of suicide events. They also provide staff support to Commanders who have concerns, issues, and challenges associated with suicide. This quick response team can be activated on request, and is there to provide Leaders and Commanders with the assistance required to help reduce and eliminate the threat of suicide throughout our Army Reserve.

For more information, contact the Army Suicide Prevention Program Office at: 703-571-5576 or e-mail: [G1suicide@conus.army.mil](mailto:G1suicide@conus.army.mil)

### Records & DD 214's for Vets online



The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online, <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes.

NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site.

Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents.

### Education Activity Launches Interactive Resource

American Forces Press Service



ARLINGTON, Va., April 13, 2010 - The Department of Defense Education Activity's educational partnership has launched an interactive educational resource for military families, military leaders and school leaders.

The resource, "Students at the Center," provides information on important policies, procedures, and best practices that are critical to supporting the needs of military families' education.

"Our military families have high expectations and unique needs regarding the education of their children, and we saw a need to develop a tool to assist everyone who has a stake in the educational process," said Kathy Facon, chief of the educational partnership.

Available online at <http://www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu>,

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the guide offers

information focused on specific stakeholder needs, Facon said.

"This guide provides military parents, military leaders and school leaders information on relevant educational issues affecting each group," she explained. "When local education agencies, military commands and DoDEA partner to share information and resources, children benefit."

For educators serving children from military families in a public school system, the guide offers information on the different military service branches, ranks, and protocols. It outlines current Defense Department initiatives to support schools and the Education Department's impact aid program. It also offers insights regarding the issues military families face, including frequent transitions and parents deploying.

For families, the guide offers information on navigating the U.S. education system, choosing a school and being an effective advocate for a child.

Military leaders visiting "Students at the Center" will find suggestions on supporting military families, forming and strengthening installation-school partnerships and ways to enhance communication between local education activities, the military services and families.

"The educational partnership is dedicated to every military child's right to a quality education regardless of their location or how often their family moves," Facon said. "We know that there are a lot of great resources already available regarding education issues for military families, but we wanted to develop a tool that would bring those resources together in one place."

The guide will be available in May and can be ordered in print format and on CD through the Military OneSource Web site.

## New DVD Helps Children Deal With Deployment

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, March 31, 2010 - Defense and USO officials joined military families at the U.S. Navy Memorial here yesterday to celebrate the launch of a new

DVD created to help military children cope with a parent's deployment.

"With You All the Way" -- a joint effort by the Defense Department, USO and the Trevor Romain Co. -- offers school-age children help with preparing for and dealing with all stages of deployment, from pre-deployment to separation to reintegration.

"We are grateful for the dedication and creativity of people like Trevor Romain and

the generosity of groups like the USO," said Barbara Thompson, director of the Pentagon's office of family policy and children and youth.

"With [their] support, we are better able to help bridge the gap that results from months and miles of separation between children and their parents. This is no small feat and the worthiest of missions."

The free DVD is slated to be distributed through USO centers and Military

OneSource in May as part of a children's deployment kit that also contains a stuffed bear called Cuzzie, postcards, a journal and a set of dog tags inscribed "With You All the Way."

"The USO is devoted to supporting the military family, especially military children who aren't able to choose their situations," said Sloan Gibson, USO president. "Our partnership with Trevor Romain allows us to bring unique programming to these individuals, giving them resources to handle some of the tough circumstances and sacrifices that come with being a military child."

Thompson echoed his remarks, calling the DVD a "fantastic resource."

"The DVD helps to let [military children] know that even though it may feel like they are alone, we are with them all the way," she said yesterday.

The DVD follows main characters Jack and Skye as they help their friends Darrell, Pablo and Brittany deal with different aspects of deployment. Darrell's brother is preparing to deploy, Pablo's mother has deployed again, and Brittany is adjusting to having her father back home. It also includes interviews with military families who discuss how they work to stay connected. Noted children's author and motivational speaker Trevor Romain interacts with the characters and guides viewers through the DVD.

When faced with deployment, Thompson noted, parents and children often deal with a gamut of emotions ranging from anger and fear to worry and uncertainty.

"But something else that I know ... is that together they work hard to stay connected and to work through all those feelings," she said.

While it's a natural impulse to want to bottle up or hide feelings, the weight of doing so can take its toll, Thompson said, using the "doughboys" from World War I as an example. They "had a song that told them to 'pack all your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile,'" she said.

"Can you imagine how heavy your kit bag? your backpack? would be if you packed it full with your worries?" she said. "Since 1915, we've learned that although you can pack your worries away, you may only want to do so for a while. It might be healthier to take those troubles out of the bag and deal with them."

Thompson lauded the efforts of Romain, who worked closely with the USO and military to ensure the DVD met the needs of military children.

In a blog about the DVD, Romain said he decided to start the project about three years ago after he went on several overseas tours with the USO. "After visiting with these kids, it became very apparent that a resource was needed to help them with deployment," he wrote.

Children relate to his characters because they share many of the same concerns, he wrote. "We try to never shy away from being real and telling the story from a child's perspective.

"If this DVD can give these kids just a little support, some hope and inspiration, and validation of what they are feeling, it will make me extremely happy and proud," he added.

## USO Announces Sesame Workshop Tour Dates



American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2010 - The Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families, a free traveling USO show based on Sesame Workshop's award winning "Talk, Listen, Connect" initiative and produced in partnership with Vee, is back in the United States after an around-the-world tour.

The show, which is exclusively for military families, kicks off its second swing through the United States on April 17 at Fort Knox, Ky.

Audiences will experience a 25-minute character performance and receive promotional items and outreach materials, officials said.

The Sesame Street Workshop/USO partnership put on its first show at Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., in July 2008. Since then, The Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families has traveled more than 45,000 miles to 76 bases in nine countries. More than 120,000 servicemembers and families have been entertained during 176 shows.

"The momentum that this show has gathered since it first performed for military kids and families is unbelievable," said Gary E. Knell, Sesame Workshop president and CEO. "To see how families come together and then use the messages from the show to talk to their kids is the greatest reward that we could ask for. We at Sesame Workshop are thrilled to continue this work with our partners and friends at the USO and reinforce our commitment to military families."

Sloan Gibson, USO president, noted the positive impact the tour is having on the

military community.

"The fact that more than 100,000 troops and family members have attended these shows so far speaks volumes about the tour's relevance to today's military," Gibson said. "We listen to our troops and understand the challenges they face at home, and are proud to call Sesame Workshop our partner in helping to ease the daily stresses on military families."

## Review Drops Two-War Force Size Paradigm

By Jordan Reimer, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, March 10, 2010 - The model used to determine the appropriate size of the United States military is being replaced following the Quadrennial Defense Review process, a senior defense official said here today.

Speaking on background at a two-day seminar on the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review hosted by the National Defense University, the official said the theory that U.S. forces should be sized based on the need to fight two major wars simultaneously no longer is appropriate.

"We're looking for the broadest range of capabilities to deal with the broadest range of scenarios," he stated. "It's not as easy to talk about ... as the two major theater war paradigm, but it's important, and it's essential to our preparation for future conflict."

The 2010 QDR, released Feb. 1, is a comprehensive review of Defense Department strategy and priorities, closely tied to the defense budget. The report identified several key goals for the department in the next decade.

The QDR's overarching themes are two-fold: rebalancing U.S. military capabilities and reforming defense processes and institutions. This, the report states, will enable the military to prevail in today's wars, prevent and deter future conflict, prepare to defeat potential adversaries, and preserve and enhance the all-volunteer force.

Rather than focusing on preparing to fight two major wars at the same time to achieve these goals, the military instead must prepare to "succeed in a wide range of contingencies," the official said.

While this decision signals a major change in a policy that has been the staple of U.S. force planning since the 1990s, the official emphasized that this new direction was, in fact, a continuation of the previous administration's work in the 2006 QDR.

"I want to give credit to the previous QDR and its alternative force planning construct," the official said. "We were able

to build off of that [for this review]."

The new force-sizing paradigm for the short term accounts for ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as "foundational activities" to prevent and deter conflict from both transnational terrorist threats and potential state adversaries. In addition, the military will be outfitted with sufficient forces to support civilian authorities for emergency relief missions.

"The forces required to do operations in Haiti obviously present a challenge given the strains on the force, but we've already demonstrated since the QDR's [release] that despite the ongoing operations, the Department of Defense is capable of bringing additional capabilities to bear to deal with emerging challenges," he said.

In trying to determine an appropriate force-sizing model for the mid-to-long term, the review team considered various combinations of operations that the military could face at any one time, the official said. These included stabilization operations, defeating a state with anti-access capabilities, supporting civil authorities, and combinations of those possibilities, along with other possible contingencies.

The QDR group then looked to "mix and match" from those categories to determine likely scenarios with which the military might be confronted, and determined force structure based on requirements needed to meet those challenges.

One of the scenarios, defeating two regional aggressors along with heightened alert posture in or around the United States, probably is the "closest to our old planning program," the official noted. However, "it's only one of a number of options that were considered."

Recognizing that this new construct didn't convert simply into a numerical equation, the official nonetheless remained confident in its efficacy.

"It's intended to be a realistic assessment of the type of demands our forces may face in the future," he said.

## Confront Financial Issues Early, Expert Advises

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, April 7, 2010 - Tough economic times have taken their toll on Americans in recent years, leaving many buried under debt or saddled

with a now-unaffordable dream house that's plummeted too far in value to sell.

While it may be tempting to ignore debt-related issues and toss unopened mortgage statements and bills into a neglected

pile, confronting the issue head-on offers a much better option, a defense financial expert noted.

"Financial problems aren't like a fine wine; they don't get better with age," said Dave Julian, the Pentagon's personal finance director. "People should act sooner rather than later to get their finances under control."

Servicemembers and their families have a plethora of free resources at their fingertips to help, he noted, whether it's Military OneSource consultants or on-base personal financial managers. Both resources can help people devise a budget, identify spending pitfalls, manage debt and set up short- and long-term financial plans, he added.

"It's important to be on a plan, to live within your means and save for emergencies and long-term goals," Julian said. "Financial counseling can help you do that."

People also can turn to private-sector resources, such as nonprofit credit counseling agencies, but should do so cautiously, Julian warned. "It definitely pays, because of the potential of increasing your financial hardship rather than helping it, to do the research," he said.

People who are swimming in debt may be tempted to turn to a debt consolidation or settlement service, but this path also can lead them deeper into debt, Julian noted.

Debt consolidation or settlement companies look at debt, in some cases negotiate lower interest rates, and then work out a payment plan, or they can bargain with creditors for a lower payback amount. While attractive to people mired in debt, these companies are a largely unregulated industry, Julian noted, and some prey on debtors fueled by desperation.

"People should be very concerned and very careful," he said. "With the economic conditions that have arisen in the last year and a half, two years, a lot of these organizations have sprouted up and not all of these have been the best actors."

He noted that while it's common to require up-front fees, some companies may just take the money and run. "There have been cases in the news where members have paid their up-front fees and expected the debt settlement company to negotiate on their behalf with their creditors," he said. "But then a month, two months go by, and they've been paying their fees and find out the unreputable companies are gone."

Julian recommends people first consult with their installation personal financial manager or a Military OneSource consultant, who can do the research legwork and help to steer them toward reputable companies. The Better Business Bureau also can be a helpful resource to see which companies have favorable ratings, he added.

Even if they use a reputable company, people who pay back a lesser amount than

they originally owed may find their credit rating affected, Julian said. "Any time you can pay back the full amount you owe, it is much better by credit reporting agencies, and is just a lot easier to do," he said.

But ideally, he added, people will avoid the problem in the first place or seek help at the first sign of trouble. "It's best to try to manage your finances as best you can or ask for help early on," he said.

Another potential pitfall is mortgage restructuring companies that offer to make mortgage payments more affordable. Julian recalled meeting a sailor who was about to pay a hefty fee the next day to have his loan restructured, something the sailor could have researched himself and done for free. The Navy intervened and the sailor kept his cash, but many others have lost money along the way.

As with debt consolidation companies, people should do their research first before handing money over to any company that is claiming to save them a lot of cash. In many cases, people can work with lenders to adjust payment plans or interest rates to make mortgage payments more affordable, all free of charge.

Above all, when behind in payments, it's important to speak up, Julian said.

"Nearly 58 percent of folks that lost homes due to foreclosure in 2007 never contacted their lender," he said. "Banks really don't want your house. They want your payments. If you can work out a payment plan with your lender, that's the best scenario."

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act provides a wide range of protections for servicemembers facing mortgage issues. The act is intended to postpone or suspend certain civil obligations so servicemembers can devote full attention to duty and relieve stress on themselves and their families, according to a Military OneSource fact sheet. For instance, servicemembers who anticipate they may fall behind in their mortgage payments may be able to go into court to ask for anticipatory relief under the act.

Servicemembers can find out more about the act from their local legal assistance attorney.

The government also has several housing programs, some for first-time buyers and others for mortgage and foreclosure assistance. People can research these programs online through sites such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Julian suggested.

The first line of defense in dealing with financial issues is education, Julian said, noting that all the military services offer some type of basic financial classes. This can be especially helpful for young servicemembers, he added, who may have entered the military with up to \$12,000 of unsecured debt.

Julian urged servicemembers to take

advantage of the military's Thrift Savings Plan or Savings Deposit Program. The Savings Deposit Program offers deployed servicemembers the opportunity to invest up to \$10,000 and receive 10 percent on their return annually.

"About half of our force is 25 and under," he said. "They are young, and time is their friend for savings and investment plans. Small contributions now can yield big returns in the future."

No matter how great the debt, Julian said, people shouldn't give up hope, and he urged those with financial problems to take advantage of the help that's available to them.

"It won't be easy, but you can get there," he said. "Folks do it every day."

## Defense Department Launches Open Government Plan

American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, April 8, 2010 - The Defense Department today released its Open Government Plan, which articulates how the department seeks to make its operations and data more transparent to the public, officials said.

Available online at <http://www.defense.gov/open>, the plan outlines the department's efforts to expand opportunities for citizen participation, collaboration and oversight. It is the latest major milestone for the department in its focus on openness and transparency, as envisioned in a directive issued in December by President Barack Obama.

"The Department of Defense has demonstrated its commitment to improve transparency, participation and collaboration," since the directive was issued, Elizabeth A. McGrath, assistant deputy chief management officer, said in a news release. "Improved transparency can enable the public to better understand goals and activities of the department and facilitate analysis of data never before shared publicly. Broader participation can serve to lower barriers between the federal government and public citizens."

Together with public input, the Open Government Plan includes material from across the department, drawing on the expertise of management, public affairs, the technology sector, security and legal professionals. The collaborative nature of the process is symbolic of its goals: an agency that is more efficient and collaborative at accomplishing its key mission and is more transparent and open to taxpayers, officials said.

"Embracing open government at the Department of Defense will generate new ideas benefiting both the warfighter and U.S. citizens," McGrath, head of the Defense Department's Open Government project, said. "The department looks forward to strengthening the pillars of Open Government in the months and years to come."

In the past four months, the department has created an open government Web page, added high-value data sets to <http://www.data.gov> and has begun to create a governance structure for a long-term commitment to these goals.

In February and March, the public was invited to submit ideas for the plan on an Open Government Web site. Citizens suggested 92 ideas, cast more than 600 votes and wrote 111 comments.

Defense officials reviewed all of the suggestions and comments in drafting the Open Government Plan document, and specifically committed to acting on several of the most-popular ideas.

The plan, posted online today, aims to continue the dialogue by allowing the public to comment on individual sections, officials said.

## 500 Thousand Jobs Are Listed On the EPO Website, What Are You Waiting For?



That's right. One half million jobs - open now, looking for someone who has the skills you bring to the table. As a Servicemember, you report to work on time, you have strong work ethics, you're a leader, you're highly trained, and you're drug free and have high morals. You want a job that is challenging yet offers you the opportunity to grow; a job that pays a living wage and provides you a continuum in your civilian career that complements your military skills.

To learn more about employment opportunities with employers in your state, reach out to the EPO Program Support Manager (PSM) in your area.

To find a PSM in your area, call Johnny Dwiggins, National Program Manager at: 336.293.9115 or 404.313.2788 or <http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/EPI/Pages/ProgramSupportManagers.aspx>

Let us be your gateway to a half million jobs! Log on through the EPO portal: <http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/EPI/Pages/default.aspx>

For additional assistance, please contact us at:

Email: [arcareers@usar.army.mil](mailto:arcareers@usar.army.mil)  
Phone: 703.601.0898

Or follow EPO on a social media site where you'll learn about upcoming job fairs, briefings, new employers and EPO in the news. For Twitter, Flickr, Facebook and more, go to our website:

<<http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/EPI/Pages/default.aspx>>

Click on one of the links in the "Follow the Employee Partnership Office" box in the bottom right hand corner of the screen.

## Statement by Secretary Gates on impact on health care legislation on TRICARE



As Secretary of Defense, the health and well-being of America's men and women in uniform is my highest priority.

Our troops and their families can be re-assured that the health care reform legislation being passed by the Congress will not negatively impact the TRICARE medical insurance program, as it already meets the bill's quality and minimum benefit standards. This was clarified by a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday and is expected to be re-affirmed by the Senate.

The President and I are committed to seeing that our troops, retirees and their families will continue to receive the best quality health care.

U.S. Department of Defense Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), On the Web: <http://www.defense.gov/releases>

## 2010 AUSA Newell Rubbermaid Volunteer Family of the Year Award Information Sheet



### The Award

The AUSA Newell Rubbermaid Volunteer Family of the Year Award recognizes an exceptional Army family whose dedicated volunteer service significantly contributes to improving Army well-being and the well-being of the local community.

### Sponsorship

The Rubbermaid Group and AUSA have partnered to recognize the contribution that families make to the United States Army and to local communities through volunteer

service.

### Eligibility

Active Duty, Reserve Component, National Guard, Retiree and Army civilian families are eligible for the award. Current AUSA chapter officers and their families are not eligible for this award.

### Nomination and Submission Process

Nominations for the 2010 AUSA Newell Rubbermaid Volunteer Family of the Year Award may be submitted only through AUSA chapters. Each chapter may submit up to three families for consideration and the chapter is responsible for verifying each nomination.

Although all nominations must be submitted and verified through a chapter we are encouraging units, family readiness groups, ACS coordinators and others to contact their local chapter if they know of a deserving family.

Each nomination should consist of a completed nomination form with a point of contact, address and telephone number for both the individual nominating a family as well as the nominating chapter and a 600-800 word narrative describing the nominated family's volunteerism, their overall impact on the community and any awards received. Please do not include pictures or award certificates in your submission packet. A sample narrative is available below. \*Please note: Selection of the family is dependent upon the information provided in the narrative.

Completed nominations should be returned to the Family Programs Directorate by fax to 703-236-2926, by e-mail to [familyprograms@ausa.org](mailto:familyprograms@ausa.org), or by mail to AUSA Family Programs, 2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201. \*E-mail is preferred.

Nominations for the 2010 award must be received by the Family Programs Directorate no later than June 4, 2010.

Questions regarding this year's award should be directed to the Family Programs staff at 800-336-4570, ext. 151 or 321, or by e-mail: [familyprograms@ausa.org](mailto:familyprograms@ausa.org).

## Employment Program to Resume for Enrolled Spouses

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, March 11, 2010 - The Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts program, commonly known as MyCAA, will resume March 13 for the more than 136,000 spouses who already have established an ac-

count, the defense official who heads up the program announced today.

Officials announced a temporary halt in the program Feb. 18, pending a top-to-bottom review, after a six-fold spike in enrollments in January, a surge that overwhelmed the system and caused the program to nearly reach its budget threshold.

"We made a commitment to our military spouses when they established a career advancement account, and we will be true to our promises," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy undersecretary of defense for the Pentagon's office of military community and family policy.

The Defense Department will resume the program for the 136,583 military spouses currently in the program at noon EDT March 13, Thomas said.

"We sincerely apologize to our military spouses for the added burden caused by the pause in operation," he added.

While the program will resume for enrolled spouses, new MyCAA accounts or financial assistance applications will not be accepted yet, Thomas said, noting that the comprehensive review of the program still is under way.

"We are working hard to adjust the program to meet the demands of the MyCAA program and to arrive at a long-term solution for military spouses who would like to establish an account," he said. "Until that time, we encourage spouses to consult with the MyCAA career counselors who can provide career exploration, assessment, employment readiness and career search assistance."

The top-to-bottom review includes procedures, financial assistance documents and the overall program, which is intended to provide military spouses with opportunities to pursue portable careers in high-demand, high-growth occupations.

The program has been growing in popularity since its inception March 2, 2009. Enrollments had been increasing at a rate of about 10,000 a month, and in January, the number spiked to 70,000.

"We had very little time to react to that," Thomas said. "I make no excuses for that. We should have done a better job of notifying our military spouses." Thomas said he will work hard to restore the confidence lost when the program was halted.

"We certainly know we have lost some confidence," he said. "We will restore that faith hopefully by one, restoring the program, and two, having appropriate resources to ensure everyone that applies for the program receives the appropriate financial assistance.

"We appreciate what [spouses] do, and we hope that through this, that once we get this program back on track, that we don't lose any ... spouses," he continued. "We value and treasure everything you do each

and every day, not only for the Department of Defense, but for this nation.”

Thomas said he will ensure the lines of communication stay open in the days ahead. An e-mail has been sent to all program participants, informing them of the program’s resumption, and spouses will see the announcement letter when they log on to their MyCAA accounts. A “media blitz” of information will precede any announcement that applies to all military spouses, he vowed.

“We don’t want to make the mistake we made in the beginning, and that is not notifying you what’s going on,” Thomas said. “We want to make absolutely sure that you understand that we’re working in your best interest.”

In the meantime, Thomas urged spouses to be wary of questionable Web sites enticing them with employment opportunities.

“Stay the course with us and allow us to work this to finality by restoring the program,” he said. “We will make every effort possible to ensure we educate you and get the necessary funds to continue this program.”

Along with MyCAA counselors, spouses also can request free career counseling through Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 or at <http://militaryonesource.com>.

## Troops Take Advantage of GI Bill Transferability

By John J. Kruzel, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, April 21, 2010 - More than 100,000 requests from troops desiring to transfer their unused education benefits to family members have been approved under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, a defense official

said today.

Signed into law in June 2008, the new GI Bill is a Department of Veteran Affairs-sponsored program that provides the most comprehensive educational benefit package for veterans since the original GI Bill -- the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 -- was authorized toward the end of World War II.

A provision in the new bill, which permits servicemembers to transfer their unused educational entitlement to a spouse or child, has transferred “months of benefit eligibility to over 240,000 family members,” Robert E. Clark, assistant director of accession policy for the office of the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told lawmakers today.

“To date, over 105,000 requests from career servicemembers have been ap-

proved,” Clark said in a prepared statement to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, “transferring months of benefit eligibility to over 240,000 family members.”

Clark said the Defense Department plays two main roles in the joint effort with the Department of Veterans Affairs in addition to allowing for transferability.

“The department’s first role in the successful implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is the sharing of service data with VA,” he said. “We recognize the road to becoming a veteran always entails passage through service in the military. Accurate reporting of that service is vital to the determination of eligibility for all post-service education benefits.”

The other role, he said, centers on the ability to offer supplemental educational benefits, commonly called “kickers.” But while kickers are authorized under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the statute as written does not allow the department to use them, Clark noted, so officials have asked for an amendment to rectify the situation.

“To allow the services to use Post-9/11 GI Bill kickers, we requested a technical amendment in our 2011 legislative proposal package for the [fiscal] 2011 National Defense Authorization Bill to allow the service to make deposits into the [Education Benefits Fund],” he said, “and for VA to draw reimbursement from the EBF for kickers associated with the Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits.”

Clark said the Defense Department recognizes its duty to staff the all-volunteer military with high-quality, motivated and well-trained men and women.

“As we move through the 21st century,” he said, “we must continue to build upon the remarkable legacy of the visionaries who crafted the original and preceding versions and improvements to the GI Bill.”

Speaking about the GI Bill last year, President Barack Obama said it was designed “to renew our commitment to ensure that the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America get the opportunities that they have earned.”

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, Obama said in August, is as important as the original, and likewise recognizes servicemembers for their wartime service and represents “an investment in our own country.”

## From the Desk of the IG...



### “Individual Medical Readiness is the Soldier’s Responsibility”

In recent months, the periodic health assessment (PHA) has become a subject of IG interest. The intent of this article is to

provide additional training and emphasis on Soldier’s responsibility for accomplishing this annual requirement. The usual scenario is the Soldier who was selected for promotion comes knocking on our door asking for IG assistance because his or her promotion orders are being held up due to an expired PHA and the Soldier insists that he completed a PHA, but it hasn’t been documented in MEDPROS. Another common problem is the Soldier who is coming up for promotion gets turned down for a Professional Development Education (PDE) school because his PULHES reflects a “P3 or P4” and he hasn’t been boarded. Unfortunately, the problem is often brought to the IG’s attention much too late to resolve in a positive outcome for the Soldier. To keep similar type issues off the IG’s desk or better yet, prevent these issues from placing a Soldier in promotion peril, here are answers to some frequently asked questions. The information may be found in AR 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness, dated 14 December 2007; USAMEDCOM Policy and Implementing Guidance for PHAs, 14 November 2006; and AR-MEDCOM OPORD 08-100 (Periodic Health Assessments) 081700ZMay 2008.

**What is a PHA and when is it required?** Directed by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs on 16 February 2006, an annual PHA will be performed for all members of the Active Component (AC) and the Selected Reserve (SELRES). The PHA is a Commander’s program that focuses on optimizing the health and wellness of Soldiers. The annual PHA replaced the requirement for a periodic 5-year physical exam, but is not a physical exam in itself. The PHA is preventive medical screening designed to improve reporting and tracking of Individual Medical Readiness (IMR). The annual PHA decreases the time between health assessments allowing leaders to more effectively identify and process medically disqualified Soldiers. Medically disqualified Soldiers have a direct impact on the Army Reserve’s (AR) ability to meet operational and theater support requirements. Generally, Soldiers will perform the PHA during a mass Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP) Level 1 event at their unit or individually within 12 months of their last PHA. Records of the PHA will be maintained electronically in the Medical Protection System (MEDPROS) database. Commanders will be held responsible through the Unit Status Reporting (USR) process for ensuring their Soldiers complete the PHA annually.

What are the components of a PHA? A PHA includes a self-reported health status, a review of current medical issues, a symptom directed physical exam as appropriate, and clinical preventive services (counseling and interventions) recommended by age and gender.

The PHA is conducted in two parts: Part 1, the questionnaire, is conducted at a Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP) site (level 1), in a clinic, or physical exam section. The PHA questionnaire is also available online by logging into AKO and clicking on the Individual Medical Readiness block. Part 2 of the PHA is the review by a credentialed provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) at the Soldier's primary care clinic, mobilization, or SRP site who will perform a focused physical exam to address concerns identified in Part 1.

All Soldiers will have a current optometry exam, hearing test, dental screen, and given required immunizations. Soldiers over 40 years of age will undergo a fasting blood sugar, serum cholesterol testing, and EKG.

#### What happens if I get a P3 or P4 profile in my PULHES?

Here's where Soldiers need to pay close attention to the box checks and comments. Many Soldiers do not realize that their responses to the questions on the questionnaire could trigger a "red flag" and they could walk away from the SRP site with a P3 or P4 profile, and not know it. For example, if you check the box "No" indicating that you cannot lift or carry equipment weighing over 20 lbs, this will trigger a PULHES permanent profile indicator of "P3" that will be evaluated by a credentialed provider and ultimately entered in MEDPROS and Soldier Management System (SMS). Permanent profiles affect your deployability and may impact your advancement in your military career in terms of acquiring certain military schooling. A P3 or P4 profile requires two signatures by two separate military physicians (including the RSC Surgeon) and then the Soldier is referred to a medical review board held at an Army MTF. The burden of proof is on the Soldier to provide all medical documentation (both diagnostic and treatment records). The board then makes a fitness for duty determination. Don't be alarmed and rush to the Inspector General's office after you suddenly learn that your record reflects a P3 or P4 profile. Understand that the presence of a PULHES P3/P4 indicator is dependent on how you answered the questions.

**How is the PHA administered?** The PHA will be administered to the Army SELRES Troop Program Unit (TPU) or Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) through the Reserve Health Readiness Program (RHRP), formerly known as the Federal Strategic Health Alliance (FEDS\_HEALS) and to Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers through supporting Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs). The medical portion of annual SRP Level 1 or pre-deployment

processing will serve as an opportunity to complete any unfulfilled PHA requirements and document completion of the PHA in MEDPROS. Always bring with you a copy of any current profile(s), either temporary or permanent, including the letter from the medical board that determined your fitness for duty, as applicable. Also, bring a copy of your yellow shot record; and if you wear corrective lenses, bring your eye glasses on the day of the examination. Vision testing with contact lenses is not allowed.

**I'm an AGR Soldier, can I go to an Air Force Base MTF, MEPS or VA to obtain my PHA?** According to AR 40-501, paragraph 10-17b (1-2), AGR/other full time duty Soldiers will obtain fitness for duty examinations only at Active Army MTFs. If an Army MTF is not within a reasonable commuting distance, the AGR Soldier may be placed on travel orders and referred to

SRP level 1 mass event, the unit medical readiness coordinator will submit a list to the LHI PHA coordinator, who will in turn, contact the soldier to schedule an appointment. If you miss the mass event, then it is your responsibility to schedule an individual event with LHI. In either case, the LHI coordinator will locate a network provider, usually within 50 miles radius of Soldier's home of record, and schedule the appointment for the screening test(s). After the appointment is confirmed, LHI will send a letter of instruction and an official voucher for service to the Soldier to present to the provider for signature after services are completed. At present, TPU Soldiers may be paid two RMAs (one for the dental exam and one for PHA screening test). You must have a signed DA Form 1380 to get paid for the RMA. Don't forget to turn in your DA Form 1380 and appointment slip to your unit or you won't get paid. Note: you will not be reimbursed for travel (mileage). Also, you need to turn in the signed PHA voucher for services rendered to the AR-MEDCOM Surgeon's office or to your unit medical readiness coordinator as proof that you kept your appointment and also to update MEDPROS. Remember, if it isn't properly documented, it never happened and you won't get the credit for following through on your appointment.

**When is my PHA considered complete?** The PHA is only considered complete when the following information is entered into MEDPROS:

Permanent PULHES, Temporary PULHES plus the date of profile expiration (if the Soldier has a temporary profile), date of the PHA, and YES or No (Can the Soldier be made medically ready to function in an austere environment within the next 6 months?)

**How can I check the status of my PHA and can I get a copy of the report?** Yes, you can log into your AKO and check the status of your IMR. The portal is "My Medical Readiness Status" and from there you can access the 8 FMR categories, obtain a copy of your PHA questionnaire, view your PULHES, or click on the evaluation tab to view your cholesterol and other lab results. If lab results are abnormal (out of the normal range), it is the Soldier's responsibility to follow up with his or her primary care physician. Finally, if you see anything other than a "green traffic light" in any of your FMRs, click on the status link to determine why it is amber or red. When in doubt or If you have any questions, contact your unit medical readiness coordinator.

This article was written after consulta-

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the next closest Army MTF to his or her duty station. The AR-MEDCOM Surgeon has made special provisions with the contractor, Logistics Health Institute (LHI) for all Soldiers (AGR and TPU) to complete their PHA at a mass SRP level 1 unit event. If you have a permanent profile that was issued at a place other than an Army MTF, the profile must be submitted to the overseeing Army MTF together with all pertinent examination and treatment records, for review, approval, and translation to Army standards. Also, it is important for all AGR Soldiers, after having obtained a dental exam at a place other than an Army DENTAC, to remember to get a signed copy of their DD Form 2813 (DoD Active Duty/Reserve Forces Dental Examination) and turn in to the Surgeon's office, unit administrator, or your unit medical readiness coordinator to update MEDPROS with the current dental readiness classification.

**How do I obtain a referral to complete my PHA?** There are two ways to accomplish this task: If you attended an

tion with the AR-MEDCOM Surgeon's office. Points of contact are COL Zieres at (727) 563-3638 or LTC Huggins at (727) 563-3775.

## Bases Get New Names in Realignment

By Lisa Daniel, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, March 24, 2010 - Some military installations are consolidating and getting new names as joint basing becomes a reality.

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission's directive to consolidate 26 stateside military installations into 12 joint bases has brought names such as Lewis-McChord, Langley-Eustis, and even the trilateral McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst into the lexicon of military installations.

Settling on new names was but a fraction of considerations undertaken in the four-year joint-basing process, which produced 12 agreements that range from 600 to 1,000 pages and cover everything from billeting to signage to services, said Air Force Col. Michael "Mickey" Addison, the Defense Department's deputy director of joint basing.

While each joint base has its own unique challenges and experiences, Addison said, the process created much-needed uniformity in directing 49 like functions for each base.

"The Department of Defense now has common output level standards," he said. "Not having those standards was largely why we had difficulty doing this in the past."

Without common standards, Addison said, some services would, for example, measure unaccompanied housing by the number of beds, while others would measure space. "One of the benefits of joint basing is in learning how to talk to each other," he said. "We all had different languages. If you say 'emergency response' to a soldier, sailor, airman or Marine, you may get four different ideas of what that means."

Joint basing isn't new, Addison pointed out. The military has used it for years in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia. Still, he said, the concept met with some resistance stateside.

"We know how to fight jointly," Addison said. "We've gotten really good at that in the past 10 or 20 years. What we aren't as good at yet is living together back in the [continental United States]."

As commander of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Army Col. Tommy Brittain is motivated by his experiences with successful joint basing overseas as he works

to meet the BRAC deadline to become fully operational by October. The start of joint basing, he said, can be traced back to the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act.

"We've been training and fighting together ever since," he said. "So, it was a natural progression to come to this conclusion at these certain locations to take care of mission commanders, warfighters and their families.

"I'm very proud to be a member of this team and leading this team in this direction," he added. "Honestly, I believe this is going to be historical."

Brittain called the transition "a very complex process" that succeeds through teamwork at every level, outreach to stakeholders and "100 percent transparency in what we're doing."

Like a city manager overseeing an annexation, Brittain had to study how the support functions of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base would merge, where they would collocate, how jobs would change, and much more.

"What was managed as two separate cities now is managed as one city," he said. "We have maintained our appropriate storefronts at the right location for where all those customers live, work and train."

Brittain said his job was made easier by the appointment of Air Force Col. Jerry K. "Kenny" Weldon II as the deputy base commander at Lewis-McChord. Weldon served in the Pentagon's installations and environment office and was well-versed in joint basing before going to Lewis-McChord.

"There is great teamwork and leadership offered by Kenny Weldon and [the Air Force's 62nd Airlift Wing commander], Col. Kevin Kilb, and so I have tried to continue to move forward with the teamwork approach to solve any problems that arise," Brittain said.

While the nature of the base merger forces compromises, Weldon said, teamwork grew out of the realization that joint standards for services and dual oversight of services would create a better installation.

"There is a clear recognition in today's environment that you've got to have strong support to take care of warfighters and their families," he said. "It's a goal at every installation, but this is a concerted effort to try to put a definition to what that means."

The BRAC commission created the joint bases to bring efficiencies, common practices and cost savings to bases that were duplicating efforts, even while most shared a fence line, Addison said. One of the biggest challenges has been to assuage fears that joint basing strips services of their culture and heritage, he said.

"That's the hardest thing for our base commanders to do is to assure people that nothing will be lost, then build a joint cul-

ture that preserves the cultures and what is special about each," Addison said.

Brittain said he has tried to do just that as he reaches out to soldiers and airmen. "We're getting out the message that this does not change our service culture, this does not change our service history, and this does not change our service mission," he said.

Such outreach, he said, is part of the process in moving the installation toward being fully operational as a joint base by October.

"We're going 24 hours a day to make sure things happen," Brittain said. "There is a great team beneath us that wear both a blue uniform and a green uniform, and they're moving the ball toward the goal."

Seven bases received new names in January:

-- Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base became Joint Base Lewis-McChord, led by the Army;

-- The Navy's Anacostia Annex and Bolling Air Force Base here became Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, led by the Navy;

-- Naval Station Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, became Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, led by the Navy;

-- Charleston Air Force Base and Naval Weapons Station Charleston, S.C., became Joint Base Charleston, led by the Air Force;

-- Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson, Alaska, became Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, led by the Air Force;

-- Lackland and Randolph Air Force bases and Fort Sam Houston, Texas, became Joint Base San Antonio, led by the Air Force; and

-- Langley Air Force Base and Fort Eustis in Virginia became Joint Base Langley-Eustis, led by the Air Force.

Five others became joint bases in October when:

-- Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek and Fort Story in Virginia became Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, led by the Navy;

-- Fort Myer and the Marine Corps' Henderson Hall in Virginia became Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, led by the Army;

-- Andrews Air Force Base and Naval Air Facility Washington, in Maryland, became Joint Base Andrews, led by the Air Force;

-- McGuire Air Force Base, Fort Dix and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, all in New Jersey, became Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, led by the Air Force; and

-- Navy Base Guam and Andersen Air Force Base in Guam became Joint Region Marianas, led by the Navy.