



The Lightning News

News from the front for Soldiers, families and friends of HHC, 359th Signal Brigade

Brigade Commander speaks to families and friends

The first thing I want to say to the families is thank you. Thank you for your understanding, support and a truly tremendous farewell ceremony. I can tell you the Soldiers were touched and will not forget the love you sent them off with.

For some of you, this is your first experience with a deployment. For others, this is a road you have been down before. Regardless, we are all together.

I would like to tell you that as time goes by, your coping mechanisms will improve and the separation will be less painful. Let's face it, though, until your Soldier is at your side again, you will not consider things to be normal.

With that said, I will tell you that you will find a new normal - a deployment normal. You will adjust to not having your Soldier there, and find ways to ease you through this year.

I encourage you to utilize each other. Contact our Family Readiness Group and other families of deployed Soldiers. Use each other as a brace for those difficult times when you need an understanding ear and comforting shoulder.

I would also ask for your patience as we head into country. The process of moving troops can be a long process. There may be a period of time where, for security purposes, the Soldiers

may not be able to contact you. We will relay word to our Family Readiness Group on our safe arrivals to major location points as soon as possible.

The main thing I want to let you know though, is that your Soldiers are doing an amazing job. They have been working hard here at the mobilization station, and I clearly see we are a cohesive team. I now have no doubt in my mind we are ready to conduct our mission. As the commander, this is a large comfort.

Your Soldiers have the next few days to enjoy a pass from training. Enjoy that time with them, whether it is in person or over the phone. Encourage them to relax and take care of themselves - they deserve the break.

Again, thank you for incredible support and love. Those are the things that will help us get through this year, so keep on sending it our way.

With the utmost appreciation,

COL Chris Kemp
Commander, 359th Signal Brigade

Connect with the 359th online:

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Fort-Gordon-GA/359th-Signal-Brigade/62779534014?ref=ts

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/359thSignalBDE>

Flicker:

www.flickr.com/photos/359th_signal_brigade/collections/

Military Website:

www.armyreserve.army.mil/359thsignal

*Some of these sites are still under construction, so feel free to make suggestions. Send to michelle.lunato@us.army.mil.

Families bid Soldiers farewell



Left, Patriot Guard Riders, who are made up of male and female veterans from a variety of services, provided a motor-cycle escort for the 359th Headquarters and Headquarters Company to the airport. Once on the flight line, the veterans shook the hand of every Soldier who was getting on the plane to leave.

Photos by Capt. Michelle Lunato



Left, Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hamill, command, control, communication and computer support noncommissioned officer in charge, with his wife, Donna, speak with a reporter from the Augusta News Chronicle about how they will handle the deployment as newlyweds. Above, Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Wilkerson, brigade command sergeant major, and Col. Chris Kemp, brigade commander, case the brigade colors. Traditionally, unit colors go with commander and his Soldiers. So, as the unit prepares to deploy overseas, the flag is covered for transport and taken out again upon taking command of the mission in country.

Right, Col. Chris Kemp, brigade commander, and his daughter, Haley, take a moment to pray with other families during the Family Readiness Group Deployment Ceremony and Reception at Fort Gordon April 10.



Right, Capt. Nath Harris, Information Assurance Computer Network Defense officer-in-charge, plays with his 3-month-old son, Grant, at the unit's farewell party. aLeft, Sgt. Shauna I. Phillips, personnel service noncommissioned officer, enjoys the Family Readiness Group event with her niece, Moriah Awkward.



Photos by Capt. Michelle Lunato

Pfc. Jessica Jones, mechanic, cuddles her 6-month-old nephew, Gage, one last time before deploying. Over 250 family members and Soldiers were at the Family Readiness Group send off for the 359th Signal Brigade.



Above, Staff Sgt. Cassandra Jackson, human resources sergeant, enjoys some snacks with her mother, Gladys Warthen, at the Family Readiness Group event. The FRG team provided an enormous spread of food for the families and Soldiers.

Greetings to all the family members from the deputy brigade commander.

I hope this newsletter finds all of you well.

All is well here with the Soldiers from the 359th. The entire Headquarters and Headquarters Company has gotten off to a great start as they did an outstanding job in proving their talents and ability to work together.

The mission rehearsal exercise we completed at Fort Lewis has helped us develop a battle rhythm we will use for the next year.

We have truly come together as a team, and I am excited and honored to work with such a great group of professionals.

I am very proud of the progress we have made so far and look forward to getting into country and on the job.

LTC Teri Hassell
Deputy Brigade Commander
359th Signal Brigade



Chaplain's Corner:

Change can bring a sense of loss

Blessings and peace to each of you. Please know that we are here to help you in any way we can. Please feel free to e-mail about any issue whatsoever! I am here to serve all of you.

My e-mail is gary.chester.williams@us.army.mil. You can also reach me through our chaplain assistant. Spc. Michael Cannon at michael.cannon5@us.army.mil.

Also if you have specific prayer requests, please send them, and I will keep them confidential unless otherwise told. If you don't mind me praying your requests in our worship service, please state your approval.

I would like to touch on any possible despair anyone might be feeling. All of you have had many changes (our deployment) in the last few weeks.

Whenever anyone is in despair, feeling hopeless, or depressed, you can always ask: "What have I lost lately?" or what do I possibly perceive as a loss lately?

Changes in our lives most often bring a feeling of loss and a sense of loss can move us to despair or depression. An example of an actual loss might be that our child 'actually' loses the companionship of their best friend due to a recent move. An example of a perceived loss might be that our child thinks

that their best friend is going to move (even though they may not) and hence they suffer a feeling of loss just thinking about the possibility that their friend may leave.

Change can bring a sense of either actual or perceived loss and the bottom line is that each of you have experienced many changes over the last few weeks.

Again, change almost always brings a sense of loss and loss can (doesn't always) lead to despair or depression. So, if you feel depressed over the last few days or if you feel that way in the future, you can look back and say to yourself, "Why of course I feel a bit sad or despairing, I have had many

changes (my spouse is physically separated from me) and hence, I feel like I have lost my best friend." Or, I'm depressed because I FEEL like I've lost control of my children. These are very NORMAL feelings and thoughts!

If you are feeling despair, please contact me or Military One Source so you can find a good listener. Talking about your feelings is very good medicine!

God bless and keep you all. It is a joy and an honor to work with your Soldier!

Sincerely,

Chaplain (LTC) Gary Williams



Capt. Michelle Lunato

1st Sgt. Andre Lipscomb, HHC first sergeant, briefs the company before releasing them to their families.

What do the different company sections do?

S1 is the staff section responsible for delivering personnel services to the 359th Signal Brigade and its subordinate units.

Personnel services encompass many things. Our responsibilities, while numerous, are all equally important.

During the last few months the S1 section, along with the rest of the 359th, has been honing its skills so that we can provide the commander and Soldiers with the best help possible.

As a section, we practiced personnel status reports, coordinated dates for Rest and Relaxation leave, established standard procedures for Red Cross Messages, and established postal operations.

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S2 is the staff section responsible for gathering information and producing intelligence that is useful to the brigade commander in making decisions. The staff members spend hours reading and researching information on classified computer systems in an attempt to understand the significance of the situation and compile what is pertinent.

The S2 of the 359th Signal Brigade consists of Maj. Ben Stevens, Staff Sgt. Chelsea Helsley, Spc. Jacob Riffe, and Private 1st Class Dietz. Riffe and Dietz are both enrolled at Georgia Southern University. Helsley is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, and Stevens is a high school chemistry professor.

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S3 is the staff section responsible for the operational side of the house.

We traditionally create the plans for military operations, coordinate training resources, assigns tasks, and assists with information flow throughout the staff.

In a signal brigade, our jobs can be as varied as research and development to support future communication operations in theater, creating a network plan for new customers, writing information papers for future projects, or producing Power Point presentations for meetings.

We have a stellar team ready to perform our mission once we get into Afghanistan.

April 2010

Brigade Highlights:

S4, the cutting edge of logistics

S4 is the staff section responsible for getting the supplies for the brigade and organizing the logistics of movement.

We manage getting your Soldiers everything from computers to uniforms to cleaning supplies. We provide them with the ability to do their jobs. So when we succeed, your Soldiers can be more comfortable and prepared to do their jobs.

Like the rest of HHC, the S4 section has come together here at the mobilization site. The hours have been long and hard, but through that, we've formed a team. They have done an awesome job, and I need to highlight a few of them now:

Sgt. Maj. Mary Howard-Edwards, S4 non-commissioned-officer-in-charge; has been doing an excellent job in keeping everyone organized and ensuring S4 is tracking all tasks that need to be accomplished and meeting logistical suspenses during Culminating Training Event (CTE) while still purchasing equipment for the unit.

Master Sgt. Ricardo Pastrana, maintenance noncommissioned-officer-in-charge and alternate S4 noncommissioned-officer-in-charge; has been instrumental in the night shift staying on track and ensuring a seamless transition during shift change and ensuring day shift has all the pertinent facts to be successful during CTE. He effectively fills the position as the S4 noncommissioned-officer-in-charge when Sgt. Maj. Howard-Edwards is out of the area.

Chief Warrant 4 William Wood, automotive maintenance officer-in-charge; has been a great addition to the team as a late deployer. He has stepped in immediately with his expertise and quick decision making on maintenance operations. His knowledge

has made our team much more successful.

Chief Warrant 4 Jose Serrano-Sanchez, signal maintenance officer-in-charge and unit movement officer; has played a vital role in getting the Torch Party, Advance Party and Main Body travel arrangements to deploy to our Area of Operations. He has been going above his level of responsibilities and voluntarily fills the positions of other individual's. Although he's working on night shift, he has continued to work during the day to ensure all transportation requirements for the brigade are met.

1st Lt. Vincent Cooper, resource management officer; is our latest addition and is already making a tremendous difference. His eagerness and willingness to learn is a great example of his leadership skills. He is actively engaged in a total new process to him and there is no doubt in my mind he will be extremely successful downrange.

Sgt. 1st Class Derrick Borders, assistant unit movement officer; was impetus in the unit making it to Ft. Lewis, Wa. without any issue. Due to his tireless efforts, the entire unit was able to travel in plush arrangements to our mobilization site and all our equipment was available when we arrived. I want to personally thank Sgt. 1st Class Borders for his work ethic and selfless service.

Sgt. 1st Class Borders is the epitome of an NCO and I would have him on my team anytime and anywhere.

Staff Sgt. Bakari Stepherson, transportation noncommissioned-officer-in-charge; has been a welcome addition to our team. His transportation knowledge base has been vital to assisting Chief Warrant 4



Capt. Michelle Lunato

Sgt. Natanisha Hershberger, JNCC-A supply sergeant, briefs the Soldiers at her station about the gear she just gave them at Fort McCoy's supply point.

Know your legal rights: Servicemembers Civil Relief Act

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) of 2003 provides several benefits to Reservists and members of the National Guard who have been “materially affected” by their mobilization and/or deployment. This federal statute, written with the goal of “...protecting servicemembers who have dropped their personal affairs to answer their nation’s call,” provides civil (not criminal) relief in three main areas: 1) interest rate reduction to 6%; 2) ability to terminate contracts without penalty (e.g., leases, automobile loans, cell phone contracts, etc.); and 3) “stay court proceedings” (e.g., divorce, child custody, civil suits, etc.) until the servicemember is released from active duty (REFRAD).

6% Interest Rate Reduction

The SCRA allows for servicemembers to request from their

creditor(s) a reduction in the interest rate on their accounts (e.g., mortgages, credit cards, automobile loans, etc.) to a maximum of pre-mobilization obligations. The 6% interest rate reduction, which also applies to service charges, renewal charges, and fees, must be forgiven and not simply deferred, for the period that the servicemember is mobilized. However, the 6% interest rate does not apply to federally guaranteed student loans. To receive this benefit, servicemembers need to request, in writing, the interest rate reduction from creditor(s) and provide the creditor(s) with a copy of their mobilization orders. A sample letter will appear on the 359th web site and Facebook site.

Contract Termination

The SCRA also allows service members to terminate contracts without penalty for breach of contract. For

example, if a servicemember needs to terminate their apartment lease or cell phone contract, they may do so without forfeiting their deposit or paying an early termination fee. The servicemember needs to request the contract termination, in writing, and provide a copy of their mobilization orders with the request.

Stay Court Procedures

Lastly, the SCRA allows servicemembers to request a “stay” (i.e., continuance) of civil proceedings while they are mobilized. This protects servicemembers, who cannot “appear” in court due to their mobilization, from having a default judgment entered against them in their absence.

For more information on SCRA contact Lt. Col. Robert Drummer, brigade judge advocate, at robert.g.drummer@us.army.mil.

Mailing Address & Guidelines

First Name, Last Name
HHC, 359th TTSB
BAF
APO, AE 09354

Capt. Michelle Lunato

Expect mail to take 7-10 days for delivery. Delivery time may be delayed during heavy mail seasons like Christmas. Forbidden items to mail include alcohol, pornography, weapons, and any item banned by the U.S. Postal Service. The post offices offer free flat rate mailing boxes in various sizes. Also remember to complete a U.S. Customs Claim form for any package you are mailing overseas.

The mobilization site - “Spartan but serviceable”



Photos by Capt. Michelle Lunato

Living conditions at the mobilization site are “Spartan, but serviceable.” The buildings that were built a few decades ago, provide the Soldiers with the basic needs of beds, showers and lockers. To transport the troops, the move by bus and “cattle cars.”

(S4 continued)

Serrano-Sanchez with all deployment issues. Staff Sgt. Stepherson has a great attitude and will ensure our transportation operations downrange will be excellent. He has also been working during the day and working at night to ensure we meet our travel deadlines.

Sgt. Natanisha Hershberger, JNCC-A supply sergeant; has been on every advanced party that the unit has trained at and ensured we were setup for success. Sgt. Hershberger is willing to take on any new challenges and always places the mission first. She has a very important mission being the JNCC-A supply sergeant and keeping accountability on large dollar equipment.

Spc. Kimberly Howard, resource management specialist; gladly joined the S4 by assisting the Resource Manager officer-in-charge in managing, tracking and developing plans for the entire brigade to include units under our control. In other words, she will track multimillion dollar contracts for us to keep our operations running.

Private 1st Class Timothy Minor, supply specialist; the S4 is glad to have their own supply specialist. Private 1st Class Minor has shared his knowledge when

it comes down to unit level supply. He keeps the S4 on the right track by assisting the S4 noncommissioned-officer-in-charge on all taskers, or just general supply operations. Additionally, he assists the HHC commander by filling the shoes of the company’s supply sergeant while he’s away.

Capt. Heather Davis, 1st Lt. Kimberly Leavall, Chief Warrant 4 Richard Powell, Chief Warrant 3 Daniels, and Sgt. Maj. Michael Jones have been supporting the mission by conducting rear detachment operations at Ft. Gordon, GA which allows us to focus on our upcoming mission.

Lt. Col. George Brady will be our latest addition to our team and we look forward to the wisdom he will bring to the S4.

Most importantly, *we would like to thank our families* who allow us to be in the 1% that has the honor of serving in the greatest Army in the world and answer the call when we are summoned to duty. Thank you for your support and unconditional love and we love you all.

I am honored to serve with such great Soldiers and leaders.

CPT RA Vinson

What is the JNCC-A and what do they do?

Joint Network Operations Control Center- Afghanistan

The JNCC-A is the operational arm of the U.S. Forces, Afghanistan (USFOR-A) commander's network operation center.

Sustaining a communications network across the entire battle space of Afghanistan, the JNCC-A manages communications assets and resources to ensure they are optimized to support the USFOR-A's assigned missions and operations.

On a regular basis, the team will handle a wide variety of situations: satellite outages, cut fiber-optic cables, communication security compromises, software compatibility, and a host of other problems that requires technical expertise.

The JNCC-A is made up of the following sections/functions: Joint Network Operations Security Center (JNOSC); Network Operations (NetOps); Information Assurance/Computer Network Defense (IA/CND); Command, Control, Communication and Computers (C4) Support; Engineering; and Enterprise

Operations.

Simply put, the JNCC-A maintains the capability for all Soldiers and leaders to communicate on the battlefield.

Without those communication tools, missions would be more dangerous and difficult to accomplish.

During the mission rehearsal exercise at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (formally Fort Lewis), Wa., the JNCC-A staff came together and simulated a wide array of situations.

The days were long, but we formed a cohesive team and the development of a standard operation procedure.

Enjoy your break team, and come back rested and ready to deploy.

LTC John H. Phillips
Director, JNCC-A

HHC has been operating like a well oiled machine for the past month as we have prepared for this upcoming deployment. The planning, coordination, execution, and support of HHC has truly shown the strengths of each. I truly hope that all Soldiers and family members enjoyed the Family Day activities put on by our Family Readiness Group during out Deployment send off.

I know that due to new faces and personnel that some of our process have changed. First sergeant and I ask that as we develop these new processes that all Soldiers adhere to them to better help themselves and family members.

Let us all stay alert and safe as we move into our next phase of deployment. If there is anything HHC can do to support please let us know in advance so that we can readily assist.

HHC
CPT Carlisle
1SG Lipscomb

Legal Team provides legal counsel and services during Mob

The 359th TTSB Legal Team of Lt. Col. Drummer, Capt. Henderson, and Staff Sgt. Salgado, while undergoing mobilization training themselves, continued to provide unit members with legal counsel and services at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. To accomplish their mission, the "Combat JAG" team maintained office hours each evening to provide legal assistance counseling and services to brigade Soldiers.

In addition to preparing wills and powers of attorney for soldiers, Drummer, brigade judge advocate, advised Soldiers on their rights and responsibilities under the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (SCRA) and the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Salgado provided brigade Soldiers with sample SCRA "6% interest rate reduction" letters. Meanwhile, Henderson, chief of military justice, conducted pre-deployment briefings on the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), Law of War, and Rules of Engagement.

During the Mobilization Readiness Exercise (MRX), the "Combat JAG" team also got to demonstrate its credo, "Ready and Relevant." During the staff planning exercise, Drummer provided input on various legal implications of a "scenario" as part of the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), as well as advised the commander and staff on various "contract" issues. Salgado, working as the paralegal for the brigade, created a "tracking system" for actions of the team, as well as updated and created "battle drills" for the brigade that required legal analysis. Henderson, also performing as operational law legal advisor, prepared a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) memorandum on the Rules for the Use of Force (RUF) and advised the commander on various administrative investigations.

The team's biggest complement during the mobilization was the recognition by their fellow comrades of the important and the substantial role that Judge Advocates play "in the fight." Hooah!