

WARRIOR MEDIC

MONTHLY

An Army Reserve Medical Command Publication

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE



Were You Stop Lossed?



There are millions of dollars waiting to be claimed by service members and veterans who were stop lossed, and time is running out!

Those eligible must submit their claim by Oct. 21, 2010.

The DoD Web site (<http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>) links to service-specific sites, where you can get more information, or begin the Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) claim process.

The 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act established RSLSP, providing \$500 for each month/partial month served in stop loss status. Service members, veterans, and beneficiaries of service members whose service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2009 are eligible for RSLSP.

To receive this benefit, those who served under stop loss must submit a claim for the special pay. Throughout the year, the services have been reaching out to service members, veterans and their families through direct mail, veteran service organizations, and the media.

But there is still money left to be claimed, and the deadline is quickly approaching. We are reminding all service members who are eligible to submit a claim for the benefit available to them. The average benefit is \$3,500.

Tell a Friend: If you know people who separated/retired and may be eligible for this benefit, remind them to submit a claim before the deadline!

Note on Eligibility: Effective Dec. 19, 2009, per the Defense Appropriations Act, stop-lossed service members who voluntarily reenlisted or extended their service, and received a bonus for such reenlistment or extension of service, became no longer eligible to receive retroactive stop loss special pay.

Apply Now for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay:
<http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>

Obama Reaches Out to Veterans: 'You Earned It'

By Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Sept. 15, 2010 - President Barack Obama wants to make sure veterans and current servicemembers who were involuntarily retained in the military under the so-called "Stop Loss" program get the retroactive pay they deserve.

"You served with honor. You did your duty. And when your country called on you again, you did your duty again. Now, it's time to collect the special pay that you deserve," President Barack Obama said in a public service announcement released by the White House today.

Military members whose service was involuntarily extended or whose retirement was suspended between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, are entitled to a retroactive payment of \$500 for each month of extension. The application deadline is Oct. 21. Information on the special pay and links to the application are available at <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

About 58,000 of 145,000 eligible claims have been paid, and \$219 million has been disbursed of the \$534 million appropriated, Defense Department officials said.

While tens of thousands of veterans already have received retroactive pay averaging nearly \$4,000 each, the president said many others may be reluctant to apply.

"I know there's been some confusion and skepticism out there," he said. "Some veterans think this is some sort of gimmick or scam, or that it's a way for the government to call you back to service. Nothing could be further from the truth."

"As your commander in chief," Obama continued, "I'm here to tell you that this is no gimmick or trick. You worked hard. You earned this money. It doesn't matter whether you were active or reserve, whether you're a veteran who experienced 'Stop Loss' or the survivor of a servicemember who did - if your service was extended, you're eligible."

The military services are promoting the retroactive pay

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through direct mail, veteran and service organizations, websites, phone lines, print and broadcast media. The president's message underscores the effort to spread the word.

"Share this video among your fellow veterans," the president urged. "Help us get our 'Stop Loss' veterans the pay to which they're entitled. Help us make sure that America is serving our veterans and your families as well as you've served us."

Army Reserve Postures for 'Uncertain' Future

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Carden
American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Sept. 14, 2010 - With tough budget decisions on the horizon and the changing military missions in the Middle East, an uncertain future awaits the Army Reserve, the organization's commander said today.

Speaking to Army Reserve soldiers in a town hall meeting at the Pentagon today, Army Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz talked about the state of the Army Reserve and what he's doing to help evolve the force to better meet the needs of tomorrow's military.

"Everyone is trying to figure out what the future will look like and plan accordingly," Stultz said. "There's a lot of uncertainty out there."

Stultz cited "uncertainty" in how the Army Reserve's mission will change with the drawdown of forces in Iraq and the troop surge in Afghanistan. He said he also recognizes the effects unemployment and the national deficit will have on future fiscal budget requests.

Meanwhile, he said, soldiers must stay focused and can't let the current issues influence "the things we need to get done." Initiatives are under way, he added, to "operationalize" the Army Reserve.

"The natural tendency is to wait and see and let somebody tell us what the future is," the general said. "My push from my position is to push our staff, our commanders [and] our leaders to not wait. We're going to continue to move forward with the vision that we have for the Army Reserve and the things we need to do to shape the future for us."

Operationalizing the Army Reserves means that the force would be used on a regular basis to augment the active Army, Stultz explained. In the future, he said, the active Army and the Army Reserve will not have separate missions.

The idea will help to ensure the Army is more fiscally efficient and streamlined, he explained. Most importantly, he added, it will ensure the Army Reserve is an effective

tool for combatant commanders throughout the armed forces.

The mission in Iraq now requires fewer troops, and the same will eventually happen in Afghanistan, Stultz said. But because Army Reserve units are made up primarily of combat support and combat service support skills, a need exists for reservists outside of the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, he said. He noted that on a recent trip to Southeast Asia, he met with Army reservists partnering with Navy sailors to provide medical support to people in need in Vietnam, Cambodia and Singapore.

Their efforts supported the U.S. Pacific Command mission and provided thousands of people with much-needed dental and medical care, the general said. The same types of missions are under way in South America and Africa, Stultz said, noting that Army Reserve troops, in this capacity, can boost combatant commanders' effectiveness and efficiency.

"I've seen Army Reserve forces doing a lot of great things in security operations, theater engagements [and] nation building outside of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom," he said. "There's a goal for forces in the future to do great things for our nation around the world, not necessarily associated with kinetic operations."

Army Reserve troops can have a positive impact in helping foreign armies train and improve their defenses, he added.

"The Army Reserve is not just a contingency force for America," he said, "but also a valuable asset to theater engagements."

Stultz also talked about the Army campaign to manage resources and eliminate redundancy within the force. That includes military and civilian personnel and programs, he said.

"We can't afford redundancy," he said. "We can't afford two guys doing the same job. We've got to work for efficiency."

Despite these challenges and future changes, the one thing that's remained constant is the quality of Army Reserve soldiers, Stultz said.

"The good news in all of this is that our soldiers are outstanding," he said. "As I travel around the states, the world, seeing what our soldiers are doing, their attitudes [and] the dedication have never been higher."

Retention rates are exceeding goals, despite actions to reduce retention and enlistments, Stultz said. The Army Reserve still have more people than authorized, he added, and that's because of the soldiers' attitude.

"We've got a lot of great soldiers out there," he said. "All we've got to do is give them training and opportunities to grow, and keep them engaged. The force is in great hands."

Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business.



September is Suicide Prevention Month, and every Leader in the Army Reserve is tasked to step up to combat Soldier suicides. This is an Army-wide campaign, and doing everything you can; from learning about a Soldier's situation, to finding where to go to get them help, can make a difference.

Suicide does not discriminate, and it can affect any Soldier for any number of reasons. Look for the warning signs.

SOME THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR ARE:

- Threats to hurt or kill self.
- Looking for ways to kill self.
- Trying to get pills, guns, or other means to harm oneself.
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide.
- Feeling hopeless.
- Experiencing rage, uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge.
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities.
- Feeling trapped, like there's no way out.
- Abusing drugs or alcohol.
- Withdrawing from friends or family.
- Having dramatic changes in mood.
- Feeling like there is no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life.
- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Giving away possessions.

If you see one of your Soldiers or anyone experiencing any of these symptoms, reach out for help. There are people willing to talk, and to help your Soldier find a way to cope and manage the issues they're dealing with.

Remember; don't dismiss any warning signs, even if everything seems alright on the surface. The intent to commit suicide can override any rational thinking.

Most suicidal ideas are associated with treatable disorders, and helping someone find a safe environment for treatments can save a life. One Soldier lost to suicide is one too many. We all need to work together to combat suicide throughout the Army community.

For More Information, contact the Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or go to this website for additional resources: <http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/soldiers/suicideprev/Pages/default.aspx>

Family Matters Blog: Deployments from a Parent's Perspective

By Lori J. Danby, Tri Counties Blue Star Moms



WASHINGTON, July 27, 2010 - Lori J. Danby is the president and founder of the Tri Counties Blue Star Moms in Northern California. Her son, Marine Corps Cpl. Brian Danby is a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

In this blog, Lori shares Brian's story of joining the Marines, how his deployment to Iraq prodded her to found the local chapter of Blue Star Moms and what she learned from both of his wartime deployments.

A Blue Star Mom Offers Tips for Deployments

My son, Brian C. Danby, decided to join the military after Sept. 11, 2001. My father is a Vietnam veteran who served 20 years in the Army. My husband's father served in the Marines in Korea. Brian's family history and the "sword" are the reasons he chose the Marines. Brian joined Sept. 12, 2005, and got out on Sept. 11, 2009 (and, yes, he planned those dates specifically). He made corporal and is still in an inactive status.

When I learned of Brian's first pending deployment to Iraq scheduled for January 2007, I was inspired to start our local chapter of Blue Star Moms, the Tri Counties Blue Star Moms. I knew there had to be other moms facing some of the same anxieties that I had. I searched the Internet looking for a support group. I came upon the Blue Star Mothers of America Inc. What impressed me most is that it is an organization for moms with children who are serving and/or have served in all branches of the armed forces. Since we are in a small town, Yuba City, Calif., I knew it was best to include all branches.

As a Blue Star Mom, I would like to share some tips I learned as my son completed two wartime deployments, the first to Iraq and a second to Afghanistan. I think these tips are important because much of the communication between the military and servicemember tends to seem geared toward their spouse and dependents, leaving parents somewhat out of the loop.

- This is the most important!!! Keep the lines of communication open between you and your child. They have completed boot camp or basic training and have been trained to be a fighter. They are no longer your little boy or princess. Sometimes communication falters as they have a hard time expressing themselves in this new role. When they are facing their first deployments they are as scared as you, but have been trained not to let it show.
- Attend any and all "Family Days." These events are informative and allow parents to get to know your servicemember's closest friends and their parents. Make sure you exchange contact information with these other parents. Usually, you will be your servicemember's liaison, in the Marines they are known as Family Readiness Officers. This is the person on their base that can help with information, payroll and other needs.
- Help your servicemember fill out their legal forms such as power of attorney and their will. If you have the power of attorney, keep a copy for yourself and provide copies of everything to the military. Encourage your servicemember to add you as a contact name on his/her documents. If you are divorced, adding both parents is best. If your servicemember is married, encourage them to add your name, too. In the case of an emergency, only the people listed are the ones the military will contact.
- If you are divorced, PLEASE, put your differences aside and stand as a united unit for your child. Nothing is more stressful for your child than parents who cannot be in the same room with each other as your servicemember is preparing for deployment.
- Get your passport, now and make sure it remains valid. If your servicemember is injured, and the military deems it beneficial, two family members are allowed to travel to your servicemember's bedside.
- Most companies will suspend, without penalty, some accounts, for example, cell phones, car insurance, gym memberships. These companies will often request a copy of the servicemember's orders.
- Make sure you get your servicemember's deployment address. Care packages from home are the best morale booster. Please feel free to send extra, unfortunately, some soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen will never receive anything from home.
- Keep your letters and phone calls light; try not to burden your servicemember with family issues that can wait until they get home. You want their minds on their job -- not worrying about what is going on at home which they have no control over anyway.
- If you have a family emergency, such as the death of an immediate family member, contact your local American Red Cross. Have their name, rank, and unit information available.
- Last but not least, look for an organization where you can volunteer to support our troops. Sharing experiences with other parents is very beneficial and it gives you an avenue to relieve some of your anxieties.

I hope these help. Please, thank your child for making the tough decision to join the military and defend their country. Our country was built and stays free because of the sacrifices made by our veterans and our children.

To comment on this blog, please visit the Family Matters blog.

Family Matters Blog: Blogger Shares Back-to-school Tips

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Aug. 16, 2010 - After two months of summer vacation, the natives are restless. My kids have been at home at close quarters for weeks at a time now and the tension is mounting.

It started out innocently enough. Back in June, my 6- and 8-year-old were thrilled to toss off their school shackles and dive right into summer fun. They swam for hours, visited amusement parks, built sand castles on the beach and sweated gallons during outdoor play.

While at first they were best buds, over time the sibling quarrels began to escalate along with the temperature. I've come to realize there really is such a thing as too much together time.

While my children won't admit it out loud, I think we all are secretly looking forward to the first day of school. They may grumble and moan about it, but I know when that first day of school arrives, they'll head off excitedly to meet their friends with new backpacks and school supplies in tow.

Since that time is almost at hand -- sooner than later for some -- I wanted to share some helpful back-to-school tips I found on the Great Schools website.

- For pain-free adjustments, start school-time preparations early. For example, A few weeks before school starts, move bedtime back to an earlier time.
- Put a positive spin on going back to school. Talk about the fun things your children will learn, the old friends they'll see and the new friends they'll make.
- If your children are anxious about starting the next grade, reassure them that other children have these feelings too.
- Don't make plans for big trips right before the start of school.
- Establish school-day schedules for homework, TV, baths and bedtime.
- Arrange play dates with friends from school to re-establish connections that may have been dropped for the summer, or to create new ones.

- Hit the books. Find age-appropriate books about going back to school to initiate conversations about excitement and fears.
- Get organized.
- Many schools send out school information and a packet of forms to fill out before school starts. If you can discipline yourself to fill out the paperwork several days before it's due, you'll avoid a last-minute panic.
- Have the necessary immunization records available for easy reference.
- Update school emergency contact and health information for the coming year.
- As you read through all the school information, mark important dates, such as back-to-school night, parent-teacher conferences and school holidays, on the family calendar.
- Start a folder for school newsletters and other papers so you can easily find and refer to them if necessary.
- Establish a "get ready the night before" policy. Pick clothes for the next day and pack the backpack every evening before bedtime, and you'll save precious time in the morning.
- Shopping: take advantage of sales.
- School clothes: It's always a great idea to buy what you know you'll need early, if you can. Go through your children's wardrobes and weed out everything they've outgrown. Keep in mind school dress codes while shopping. Some schools prohibit short skirts and tank tops for girls and "sagging" (baggy trousers that hang low) for boys. Schools also may have rules regarding printed words or phrases on clothes.
- School supplies: Many stores offer great sales on school supplies. Download the supply list from your school's website or pick up a list at the school's administrative office.
- Plan healthy meals. Get creative with easy, healthy ideas for school-day meals. If you plan and gather what you need on the weekends, you'll make life a lot less stressful and meals more nutritious during the week.
- Breakfast: Remember the most important meal of the day. Fruit smoothies are a quick and healthy addition.
- Lunch: Try some creative ideas for making school lunches healthy and fun. You can use cookie cutters to cut sandwiches into fun shapes, buy baked chips and low-fat crackers and pretzels, skewer fruit to make it fun to eat and sneak veggies like lettuce and cucumbers into sandwiches.
- Dinner: Plan dinners for the week ahead and shop on the weekends to

avoid last-minute trips to the grocery store.

- Set priorities and schedules. Before school begins, discuss what extra-curricular activities your child will participate in. Be realistic and don't fall victim to over-programming. And make sure to leave enough time to do homework and for family time. It's also smart to start a family calendar and have family members update it with activities.
 - Prepare for homework. Dedicate a place to do homework and establish a regular homework time. Discourage distractions such as TV, radio or the Internet during this time.
 - If your child is walking or biking to school, chart out a route to the school.
 - If your child is going to a new school, walk with or take a bike ride with your child a few days before school starts.
 - Go over the rules of stranger awareness and traffic safety. Warn your child to always walk with a friend, and to avoid vacant lots and places where there are not a lot of people.
 - Be sure your child has your daytime phone number and address, as well as the number of another familiar adult.
 - Scout out safe houses in the neighborhood where your child can go in case of an emergency.
 - If your child will take the bus, remember to get the new bus schedule.
 - If your child will be taking the bus for the first time, discuss the bus route and bus safety rules with her.
 - If you will be driving your child to school, have a backup arrangement with another parent in case you are delayed for some reason.
 - Confirm carpool arrangements in advance and make sure your children know who will be picking them up before and after school.
 - Become familiar with your school's traffic safety rules, drop-off and pick-up procedures.
 - Confirm after-school care arrangements. Most after-school care arrangements must be made months ahead, frequently in the winter or spring before your child starts school. As the school year approaches, however, it's a good idea to confirm your plans.
 - Make sure your child knows where he is going after school.
 - If your child will be home alone after school, establish safety rules for locking doors and windows, and for answering the door and the telephone.
- If you have any tried-and-true tips you'd like to share, don't hesitate to write in.

To comment on this blog, please visit the Family Matters website <http://afps.dodlive.mil/>

Toolkit Helps Separating Servicemembers Land Jobs



By Lisa Daniel, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 27, 2010 - Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines separating from the military can get extra help in finding a job from a new Defense Department resource.

The Pentagon's Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy Office, part of the Office of Personnel and Readiness, recently developed the Career Decision Toolkit to help the 400,000-plus servicemembers who separate from the military each year have a smoother transition into civilian work, John R. Campbell, deputy undersecretary for wounded warrior care and transition policy, said in an interview with American Forces Press Service today.

Campbell, a Vietnam War-era Marine who joined the department earlier this summer after working for decades in private industry, said too many civilian managers and hiring officials today don't have enough familiarity with the military to know the skills developed from a few years of service.

"Most employers today have never served, and that wasn't true when I got out" in 1970 and entered the banking industry, he said.

That, coupled with the bad economy – unemployment for people younger than 30 hovers around 15 percent nationally – makes getting hired an uphill battle, especially for former servicemembers who may never have competed in the private sector market, Campbell said.

Servicemembers applying for civilian jobs need to be able to explain how their military experience translates into the skills needed for jobs they are applying for. Many struggle with that, he said.

"One of the things I know, because I work with younger servicemembers, is that they don't realize how valuable they are," Campbell said.

Servicemembers, even as young enlisted members, serve in strategically important places and have opportunities and experiences beyond most of their civilian peers, Campbell said. "They're warfighters, but they also work on civilian projects," he noted. "They're community activists; they meet with imams."

The toolkit helps separating servicemembers "write the narrative" of their experiences, Campbell said. It includes a CD and supportive documents, its portability allows it to be used anywhere the servicemember is located, he said.

Designed by Defense Department of-

ficials in collaboration with officials from the Labor and the Veterans Affairs departments, the toolkit is available in the military transition course for separation, at Transition Assistance Program centers, and at soldier-and-family and fleet-and-family support offices.

The toolkit includes information on job interviews, resumes and cover letters, and negotiating pay and benefits, among other things, Campbell said. It also has special sections for wounded warriors.

"We have used what we think are the best tools for civilians, as well as military -- the best practices out there," he said. "And it's still evolving."

More resources are expected to become available in the fall, Campbell said.

For more information, visit: <http://www.turbotap.org/register.tpp>

Retroactive Pay for Unused Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence



You may be eligible for a \$200 per day payment thru Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) if you served more than 13 months on a qualifying tour after September 11, 2001 and your final qualifying tour ended/released from active duty (REFRAD) between January 19 - 18 August 18, 2007.

Qualifying tours are mobilization tours under Title 10 United States Codes (USC) 12302, 12304, or 12301(a). Voluntary tours, Title 10 USC Code 12301(d) qualify if more than 50% of the order period was performed in Kuwait, Iraq, or Afghanistan.

To verify eligibility and receive this benefit, contact your current unit of assignment ASAP. Be prepared to provide copies of your supporting DD214's and orders.

The authority for payment expires 28 Oct 2010, so don't delay!

Social Media Shapes Markets, the Military and Life



By Tom Budzyna, Director of Public Affairs USAG Schinnen

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31, 2010 - The Department of Defense and all of its components maintain thousands of Facebook pages according to the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs' registry maintained on www.Defense.gov.

So to think that the Department of De-

fense is timid about the use of social media -- think again.

Facebook boasts more than 500 million users and may reach 700 million within the next year. Like Google, Facebook can be thought of as one of the world's largest countries, according to a July 22, 2010, social media article in the Economist magazine entitled "The Future Is Another Country."

Public relations firm Burson-Marsteller studied the largest 100 Fortune 500 companies and found that 79 percent of them use Facebook, Twitter or YouTube; and many of them have more than four Twitter accounts.

Social media is impacting new marketing approaches. There are online shopping communities where the number of participants can drive down the price of a desirable product. If the online shopping community is big enough to meet the seller's goal, bargain. If not, no sale.

The times may always have been 'a-changing', but they just seem to change faster these days. David Armano, vice president of Critical Mass, a marketing company, said in 2009 that the one thing your company will do in 2010 is have a social media policy and actually enforce it.

And in 2010 the Department of Defense did just that.

The U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn III issued a directive-type memorandum on the "Responsible and Effective Use of Internet Capabilities" on Feb. 25, 2010, and within months servicemembers discovered they had access to social media on their computers at work.

Thinking back to the introduction of email in the workplace in the late 1980's, applications like Facebook are steering computer users away from the email inbox and into exclusive online (and mobile) virtual communities where the first stop is not just email, but much more.

Social media emerged in 1997 and is more than just marketing buzz today. It's proving to be a transformation technology that is changing business practices, markets and our entire information environment.

The Department of Defense's new policy explains that if your organization has a Facebook page, then it's referred to as an 'official external presence' and must be registered with the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs on a list maintained on www.Defense.gov (linked under 'social media'). A military organization's presence on social media pages must use official logos, official website links and adhere to a list of directives and regulations.

Being registered enables users, be they soldiers, family members or the public media, to confirm that a site is an official and a reliable source of information. Recognition on the DoD Social Media registry, like USAG Schinnen's Facebook page for example, confirms that it's operating under

guidance from their commanders, officers-in-charge or service component and that the information posted complies with DoD policy, existing regulations and official public affairs guidance.

Most of the regulations are not new, but what is new is how the Department of Defense is ensuring that their presence in social media is deliberate, coherent and on target.

Even the Army's Installation Management Command, who oversees Army communities worldwide makes, it clear in their terms of reference that public affairs offices are responsible for telling the Army and IMCOM story "through all communication venues inclusive of press releases, internet, newspapers, and social media."

It's important to heed the rules and the DoD isn't the only organization that monitors its official external presence. Former Home Depot operations manager Mark Pannell learned the hard way about speaking on behalf of his company without approval according to a case study reported in Fortune magazine's August 16, 2010, issue.

Pannell had over 700 Twitter followers and 35 years with Home Depot when his good intentions were not welcomed by Home Depot's management despite the approval by Pannell's immediate boss. Pannell now works part-time at a coffee shop.

To avoid an unwanted trip to a coffee shop, be sure your organization's official external presence is in synch with your public affairs office and the organizations web policy. If an individual thinks it's cool to start a Facebook page for their section and fail to obtain their chain of command's approval, well that's not good - plain and simple.

Social media has raised privacy concerns and social media platforms like Facebook have capabilities that enable users to protect privacy, on-line discussions and messages. It behooves users to learn these features so they can worry less about privacy and focus on communicating. According to one user, simply signing up to use social media services is an effective way to protect your privacy.

"One way to protect against identity theft is to sign up and register your Facebook page (or other popular social media account) before someone else does. Own your space," said Steve Dalby, an Army Europe Information Technology training specialist who teaches a Social Networking Systems and Site Awareness course.

Even though the new DoD social media policy does not require organizations to use social media, it has an entire hub dedicated to social media. The U.S. Army alone has hundreds of official Facebook pages registered. Thousands more comprise the collection of Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines pages, mostly Facebook, Twitter

and Flickr pages that are listed on the online registry.

Social media is so pervasive now that the DoD are marching to this new drum to make sure its voice is heard. USAG Schinnen's Facebook and Twitter page are open for business and is posted on the DoD registry. Just google "USAG Schinnen, Facebook" or "USAG Schinnen, Twitter" to find them and become a 'fan' or to 'follow' them. JFC Brunssum's Community Activity Section is also on Facebook.

In a June 11, 2009, Government Computer News story, Stephen Bullock, the strategic communication director for 7th Signal Command, which oversees brigades across Europe that control government computer networks, said that allowing access to Internet capabilities like Facebook on government computers was an effort to address inconsistent and often arbitrary decisions that had been made from base to base.

"We gave guidance that made a consistent set of web filtering standards, resulting in better service for our users," Bullock said.

Now, at one's own discretion, social media sites are accessible at home or work, prompting consideration of how to manage an individual's "brand" while safeguarding privacy. To make your online experience secure and enjoyable, Dalby offered these best practices in the social networking site awareness class:

- Physical security is important. Safeguard your mobile phone, secure your computer when it's not in use, lock the computer and the door when you leave and don't keep lists of your passwords lying around.
- Keep online conversations light, unclassified and clean.
- If you don't recognize who wants to be part of your network, simply don't let them in.
- Learn and use the privacy features of your social media service.
- Social media applications can enable conversations to be private. They also don't stop you from using another means to converse. Public Internet access points may not be private or secure. Private, real life conversations are alive, well and often the safest option.
- The principle of "need to know" applies to military conversations just as much as it does to private conversations. Instead of posting comments on a friend's Facebook page, maybe a private message is better idea.
- If you need help learning how to use social media, ask a friend. That's what being social is about.

'Virtual Installation' Becomes Reality

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Alyn-Michael Macleod and Army Sgt. Nicole Dykstra
99th Regional Support Command



CORAOPOLIS, Pa., Sept. 21, 2010 - The nation's third Army Strong Community Center, serving servicemembers and their families who live in the Pittsburgh area, opened here Sept. 18

during a ceremony attended by about 300 soldiers, family members and civic and business leaders.

The center serves as a "virtual installation" designed to support servicemembers, their families and veterans by assisting those who are holding down the home front far from the nearest military installation when their loved ones deploy.

The idea was developed by Laura Stultz, wife of Army Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve and commander of Army Reserve Command. The couple attended the ceremony.

Mrs. Stultz said she had seen the services available to families on military installations and wanted to bring that same level of service and support to military families that do not live by a military installation.

"Most of our families want to talk to someone," she said, adding that face-to-face contact can be crucial.

U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy also was on hand to open the center, and he said he understands the importance of programs that help servicemembers through his own service as a lieutenant commander in the Navy Reserve Medical Service Corps, working with wounded warriors who suffer from traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"It is so important to have this program to help 'wrap the arms' around the citizensoldiers and their families to provide the help they need," he said.

General Stultz expanded on the importance of the center and the benefits it gives to all servicemembers, especially if they are dispersed. For example, he said, the nearest active-component military installation is a four-hour drive from Pittsburgh.

The center's support is provided by trained, qualified and skilled staff available on a 24/7 basis and delivered with a personal touch, officials said.

"We cannot do enough to give back, to support our soldiers and families," the general said. "Our men and women in uniform are a national treasure. The least we can do is to bring the support to them."

The other Army Strong Community Centers in Rochester, N.Y., and Bevard, S.C., and plans call for more centers to open around the country.

Petraeus Explains Afghanistan Strategy

By John D. Banusiewicz
American Forces Press Service



KABUL, Afghanistan, Sept. 3, 2010 - Progress in Afghanistan has been faster than expected in some respects, and not as far along in others, Army Gen. David H. Petraeus said here today.

Petraeus, the commander of U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan, spoke to reporters traveling with Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, before attending a working lunch with the admiral.

The progress achieved so far in Afghanistan is "about standard for any one of these kinds of deliberate campaigns," Petraeus said.

The current Afghanistan strategy has been in the making since 2008, the general said, when a U.S. Central Command assessment and subsequent policy reviews revealed that factors he called "the inputs" of the Afghanistan mission weren't right. New organizational structures and some new leaders were necessary, he explained, and concepts and approaches needed refinement. And, he added, insufficient resources had been applied to the effort at that time.

Petraeus - who commanded U.S. Central Command before coming to Afghanistan -- credited his predecessor, Army Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, with having "a huge amount to do with getting the inputs right, obviously."

After taking command in Afghanistan in July, Petraeus said he looked at various plans and directives, including a controversial tactical directive that McChrystal had put in place to minimize the likelihood of civilian casualties.

"Some of these I've revised to varying degrees," Petraeus said. "I put out my own counterinsurgency guidance, and we refined the tactical directive. The most significant change to the tactical directive, by the way, was to state in it that no one could add further restrictions to what was in that directive."

"That was what the biggest concern was," he continued. "I think the directive was fundamentally sound. We made some tweaks to it based on requests from commanders in some of the classified portions ... that were not huge."

The problem, the general said, was that extra restrictions had been added in a handful of units as the directive made its way down the chain of command. Though the practice wasn't widespread, he added, a major mythology grew from it that the directive was tying forces' hands behind their backs.

"We have to - absolutely must - remain committed to reducing the loss of inno-

cent civilian life to an absolute minimum in the conduct of our operations,” he said. “In fact, [the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan] actually recognized recently in a report that even as we have tripled the number of U.S. forces on the ground, the number of civilian casualties has gone down by 30 percent, which is a pretty extraordinary achievement, frankly, and something we must stay committed to.”

The biggest issue, Petraeus said, was the resources devoted to the effort in Afghanistan. In January 2009, he said, U.S. forces on the ground in Afghanistan numbered roughly 30,000, and that number soon will be more than 98,000. The number of civilians has been tripled, he added, and funding has been provided for 100,000 additional Afghan security forces.

“What that is enabling us to do for the first time here is to carry out a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign,” Petraeus said.

Thanks to more International Security Assistance Force troops and Afghan special operations forces and enablers, as well as an effort that started last fall to provide the infrastructure to accommodate them, special mission element forces now are operating at a high tempo, Petraeus said. For example, he said, one of three special operations units conducted eight operations over the previous 24 hours, killing one targeted individual and detaining three others, with confirmation still pending on whether four other people detained were among the targets of the operations.

By comparison, Petraeus said, special operations units during the height of the troop surge in Iraq conducted about 10 intelligence-driven targeted operations per day. In Afghanistan today, 30 such operations take place on any given day.

ISAF and Afghan special operations forces have conducted more than 4,000 kinetic operations over the last 90 days, the general said, resulting in 235 insurgent leaders killed or captured and 1,066 rank-and-file insurgents killed and 1,673 captured.

But while military action is necessary, the general said, it’s not sufficient for success. Over the same period, he said, the special operations forces also have conducted more than 1,200 “population-centric” operations, such as key leader engagements and medical exercises, in Afghan communities.

Without a strategy that calls for first clearing an area of insurgents and then holding and rebuilding that area, the general said, the insurgents simply reclaim the area as a safe haven.

“So that’s where conventional forces come in, of course,” Petraeus said, “and the substantial increase in those and in Afghan forces has been of enormous help.”

But conducting a security campaign that seeks to take safe havens and sanctuaries

from the enemy, he said, means the enemy will fight back and violence goes up.

“Then it takes a while before you get sufficient security as a foundation for the establishment of governance where before it didn’t exist,” Petraeus said, “and that was the case in many of the central districts of Helmand province. And then, of course, that has to be solidified and some economic progress has to take place before you actually have some popular confidence that all of this is going to prove sustainable.”

Iraq Mission to Continue With Stability Operations

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Aug. 19, 2010 - With the last full brigade of combat troops now out of Iraq and another 6,000 U.S. forces to leave by the month’s end, the mission in Iraq continues with

the transition to stability operations, Army Maj. Gen. Stephen R. Lanza, spokesman for U.S. Forces Iraq, told reporters today.

“Our mission still continues,” Lanza said this morning on the CBS “Early Show.” “We’re going to transition from combat operations to stability operations, and we’re doing that as we’re drawing down our forces right now to 50,000 by 1 September.”

The final convoy of combat troops, members of the 2nd Infantry Division’s 4th Stryker Brigade, crossed into Kuwait before dawn today.

“With that brigade that just left, we’re roughly a little under 56,000 [troops],” Lanza said. That number, he said, will steadily decrease within the next 12 days to meet President Barack Obama’s mandate.

“And on 1 September, we’ll transition to stability operations as part of New Dawn,” Lanza added.

The 50,000 U.S. troops to remain in Iraq will conduct three different missions under Operation New Dawn, Lanza explained last night on MSNBC’s “The Rachel Maddow Show.”

“We’ll still continue to partner to support counterterrorism operations for the Iraqi security forces,” he said. “We will continue to support provincial reconstruction teams that work for the State Department with their job to build civil capacity and develop civil institutions and still support the United Nations and nongovernmental officials.”

In addition, U.S. forces will continue to help the Iraqi security forces build capability and capacity until the U.S. mission in Iraq ends in December 2011.

“We’ll continue to train, coordinate, advise and assist them in accordance with

the security agreement,” Lanza said.

Lanza expressed confidence in the Iraqi security forces, now numbering more than 660,000, and pointed to examples of their success. “They have shown they can secure the country for the elections. They have shown they can secure the country for major religious holidays,” he told CBS.

“More importantly, they’ve shown that they have the will, the professionalism and the ethos to continue to improve,” he said. “So we’re very comfortable with the improvement they’re making, the capabilities they’re making and the type of force they’re turning into.”

Lanza told CBS he’s also impressed that Iraqi security forces have remained apolitical while the Iraqi government undergoes its transition.

“They have stayed on their mission,” he said. “They have still conducted operations. And the population continues to have trust and confidence in their ability to provide internal security in the country.”

This growing capability, he said, “has enabled us to conduct our responsible drawdown.”

Lanza expressed hope the Iraqi government gets seated soon, mitigating recent incidents of violence.

“I would still say there are challenges here. I will still say there is violence that will continue,” he told MSNBC. “The important thing right now, I think everyone knows, is to get the government seated as quickly as possible.”

As Operation Iraqi Freedom winds down and Operation New Dawn prepares to launch Sept. 1, Lanza said the continuing U.S. mission in Iraq is enabling Iraq to move forward.

“There’s a chance here for Iraq, in terms of where they are right now, to move forward, not only in this region, but also to help the people,” he said. “And I think what we’ve done here is we’ve given them an opportunity to do that.”

Officials Extend Spouse Career Program Deadline

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Sept. 10, 2010 - Officials have extended a spouse employment program enrollment deadline in the hopes that more military spouses will be able to take spring semester classes.

Effective Sept. 13, spouses currently enrolled in the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts program, commonly known as MyCAA, will be able to request financial assistance for classes with a start date that is on or before Jan. 31. Previously,

the start-date cutoff was Jan. 15.

However, spouses still must submit their financial assistance request by Oct. 21, officials emphasized.

The change was based on feedback from spouses and schools. Many schools offer a later start date for the spring semester, and extending the enrollment deadline will give more spouses the opportunity to attend courses, said Robert L. Gordon III, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy.

“We appreciate the feedback from military spouses currently participating in the MyCAA career advancement program,” Gordon said.

MyCAA is active at this time only for currently enrolled spouses, who can participate in the program through Oct. 21. At that time, the program will ramp down in preparation for the Oct. 25 launch of a revamped program.

Earlier this year, officials reviewed the popular spouse employment program and decided to make changes to bring it back to its original intent: equipping spouses of junior servicemembers with portable careers, such as real estate and home health care, that can convey from duty station to duty station.

Previously, MyCAA offered a lifetime benefit of \$6,000 to all spouses of servicemembers. But starting Oct. 25, financial assistance will be limited to spouses of active duty servicemembers in pay grades E-1 to E-5, W-1 to W-2 and O-1 to O-2. Spouses of Guard and Reserve members within those ranks can participate as long as they can start and complete their courses while their sponsor is on Title 10 orders.

Eligible spouses will be able to receive a maximum financial benefit of \$4,000 for up to three years from the start date of the first class, with a \$2,000 annual cap. The money can be used to fund associate’s degrees, licenses and certification programs, but not higher degrees. The annual cap can be waived if a license or certification’s cost exceeds \$2,000.

Currently enrolled spouses who meet the new criteria will be able to continue with the program after Oct. 25, but under the new parameters.

Spouses who no longer will be eligible to receive financial assistance after Oct. 25 still will be able to access career and education counseling services. The new MyCAA program will include assistance in identifying and securing information on additional financial resources, employment readiness, and career exploration and counseling for all spouses of active duty servicemembers.

Military spouses can find more information about MyCAA on the Military OneSource website at <http://militaryonesource.com> or by calling Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647.

Official Urges Protection Against Identity Theft

By Heather Forsgren Weaver, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Sept. 22, 2010 - Defense Department officials are urging servicemembers to be aware of identity theft and are providing ways for them to protect themselves, the director of DOD’s personal finance office said.

Dave Julian noted that officials take the problem very seriously. “We equate it to service readiness,” he said.

Servicemembers dealing with financial issues, he explained, are less likely to be ready to fully perform their missions. Identity theft can cause financial stress, he added.

Young servicemembers who have grown up in the digital world sometimes take a casual approach to divulging information that can be useful to identity thieves, Julian said.

“Our force is part of the digital generation. Our force lives online,” he said. “We see that they are very forthcoming with their personal information.”

Additionally, he said, members of the military get a steady paycheck, and companies want to show their patriotism by extending credit to them. But that makes it easier for thieves to use servicemembers’ stolen identities and profit quickly.

To help servicemembers protect against identity theft, DOD has joined with the Federal Trade Commission on its “Deter, Detect and Defend” campaign, Julian said. While the campaign is aimed at the general public, a brochure has been developed especially for the military.

One of the key suggestions for deploying servicemembers is activating “an active-duty alert,” which requires creditors to obtain specific permission from a servicemember or an official representative before extending credit. There is no charge for active-duty alerts, he noted, and they last for one year and can be extended.

Active-duty alerts can be activated by calling the toll-free fraud telephone number for one of the three nationwide consumer reporting companies. That company is required to notify the other two companies that a servicemember has activated a duty alert.

Another option servicemembers can use to protect themselves is putting a “freeze” on their credit report to restrict access to it. Once a freeze is in place, potential creditors and other third parties will not be able to get access to a credit report unless the freeze is lifted.

Credit-freeze laws vary from state to state. In some states, only identity-theft victims can freeze their credit. The cost of

placing, temporarily lifting or removing a credit freeze also varies. Many states make credit freezes free for identity theft victims, but depending upon where they live, others may pay a fee of typically \$10 to each of the three credit-reporting agencies.

Since spouses left at home often handle deployed servicemembers’ finances, they should be aware of identity theft and how to protect against it, Julian said, so identity theft usually is covered in predeployment briefings that servicemembers and their spouses are encouraged to attend.

Single deployed servicemembers can be at a disadvantage, Julian acknowledged, because they need to watch out for identity theft themselves or have a trusted agent, such as a parent, keep track of their accounts.

But whether single or married, he said, servicemembers who choose to watch their finances while they are deployed need to remember that common-use computers are dangerous things. It’s important, he explained, to log off -- completely back out -- if they are monitoring their personal information on a common-use computer or in an Internet café.

Servicemembers should request a copy of their credit report every year from each credit-reporting agency, Julian said. Since there are three credit-reporting agencies, he suggested requesting a different copy from a separate agency every four months.

Identity theft affecting deployed servicemembers is an ongoing problem, said Gary McAlum, senior vice president for enterprise security for USAA, an insurance and financial services company. USAA has worked quickly to lock down the accounts of known victims and of servicemembers whose information had been stolen but whose accounts had yet to be targeted, he said.

A recent case involved servicemembers victimized by a criminal ring that collected personal information and then used that information to open credit card accounts and drain savings accounts, McAlum said.

Identity thieves sometimes use “social engineering” to obtain information, McAlum said, using an “authoritative-voice” tactic to get someone to offer personal information over the telephone. The thief then uses the same tactic with creditors to get credit. A thief who doesn’t have all of the information required by the creditor, he added, often will “sound dumb” to creditors to obtain the information.

Deploying servicemembers “are obviously not going to be as vigilant as they deploy, get ready to deploy or are coming home from a deployment, so it is important that they use online resources” to make sure everything is in order, said Mike Kelly, USAA spokesman.

McAlum stressed that identity theft is a

significant problem for the nation. "The fact that it is exploiting our servicemembers just makes it worse," he added.

Virtual High School Opens 'Doors' to Learning

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Aug. 27, 2010 - The Defense Department's newest high school is devoid of walls or windows, but yet has opened its "doors" this year to students scattered around the globe.

The Department of Defense Education Activity's virtual high school is an accredited distance-learning program for military students, whether they're geographically separated, transitioning between schools or just dealing with a scheduling conflict.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to close gaps and enhance students' educational experience in a 21st century environment," Marilee Fitzgerald, the activity's acting director, said. "I think it opens up possibilities for learning that we have yet to understand, yet to explore."

The virtual school offers students 48 online courses in a wide range of disciplinary areas, including foreign language, math, science, social studies, language arts and physical education, as well as 15 advanced placement courses. The school also is equipped to offer English as a second language and special education, Patricia Riley, chief of the activity's distance learning and virtual school, said.

The school primarily is designed for students eligible to attend a Defense Department school but are living in remote locations, Riley said, noting that students from as far away as Australia and Papua New Guinea already have enrolled. Most attend local schools but need courses such as U.S. history to graduate, she explained, and the virtual high school can help to fill this gap.

Next up on the priority list are students currently attending Defense Department schools, Riley said. Students are asked to seek traditional in-school classes first, but can request online access when there's a scheduling conflict or if a required course isn't offered in the school. The virtual school also is useful, for instance, for students transitioning from overseas to stateside, or from a Defense Department to public school, who need to ensure they meet the requirements for their new school, she added.

"This school is particularly important for military dependent students, who do move more often," Riley said, noting she's talked to parents whose children have attended up to four different schools during their high school careers.

"The flexibility of scheduling is critical and speaks to the transition needs of students in military families," Riley said. Education activity officials are "well aware of the curriculum needs and planning that needs to take place to help students meet academic goals."

The courses are self-paced, but students still receive support every step of the way. Teachers are located in three hubs -- Wiesbaden, Germany; Camp Humphries, South Korea; and Arlington, Va. -- and offer real-time online support to students scattered worldwide in a range of time zones, Riley said.

"We strategically placed them in different parts of the world to be closer to where students are," she explained.

This live support enables Web conferencing, peer-to-peer data sharing and question-and-answer sessions with teachers. "They're also there to simulate the true classroom experience of a face-to-face environment," Riley said.

The school has a model of 20 to 25 teachers per 1,000 students, but is far from full capacity, Riley said. Additionally, the school has a "virtual counselor" who works in concert with counselors at local schools. The counselor can help students identify possible voids and fill those requirements with virtual classes, she added.

As for the road ahead, Riley said plans are in the works to make the virtual school diploma-granting, which would require the school to offer all of the courses needed to meet graduation requirements. The virtual high school currently operates as a supplemental school, she explained, meaning it's intended to fill in the gaps rather than replace the activity's brick-and-mortar schools.

"The majority of students only need supplemental courses," Riley said. "However, we also want to accommodate those students who are in isolated situations and might need the ability to acquire a diploma from a distance."

Officials also hope to create virtual elementary and middle schools down the road, Riley said. "But this high school is a great starting point and increases education opportunities for our students."

Fitzgerald called the virtual high school a "great step forward."

"It's an important contribution to the way we educate children in the 21st century DoDEA," she said.

For more information, visit: <http://do-dea.edu/home/>

Family Matters Blog: Non-profit Groups Step Up to Help Military Families

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Sept. 7, 2010 - America's support of our troops and their families has been a welcome theme during this past decade of war. The stories of support are abundant, from top leaders encouraging Americans to salute troops to caring neighbors pitching in to help a deployed family.

Some people have taken this support even a step further, creating innovative programs and organizations that are doing extensive work on behalf of military families.

Eight of these organizations were lauded for their efforts to improve military families' quality of life during the 11th Annual Newman's Own Awards ceremony Sept. 1, which I wrote about in my American Forces Press Service article, "Cartwright Lauds Nonprofit Groups for Military Support."

The volunteer-based organizations received awards totaling \$75,000, with Inova Health System Foundation's Military to Medicine program taking the highest honor and corresponding \$15,000 award.

The behind-the-scenes contributions of these organizations are every bit as valuable as the more visible contributions of those in uniform, Marine Corps. James E. Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at the ceremony.

"For those who go out and sacrifice in a very overt way, there are those that serve in a very different way, but equally as important," he said.

"What you have done is no less important to the legacy of this country."

The Newman's Own Award was presented to the following programs and organizations:

- Military to Medicine, of Falls Church, Va., recruits and trains extended military family members to become workforce-ready health care employees. Its purpose is to help military spouses, wounded warriors and their caregivers, veterans, National Guard and Reserve members and servicemembers transitioning to civilian employment find accessible short-term training with immediate career accessibility in health care.
- Carolina Canines for Veterans, of Wilmington, N.C., provides trained dogs rescued from local shelters to assist wounded warriors. This program, launched by the Carolina Canines for Service organization, received \$10,000 for its efforts.
- Military Marriage Enrichment, of Cor-

sicana, Texas, strengthens military marriages, enabling couples to better cope with the stressors of combat, wounds or multiple deployments. The program, created by Marriage Management Consultants Inc., received \$10,000.

- Empowering Military Families through Employment, a program of the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network of Lake St. Louis, Mo., features virtual training seminars that provide military-affiliated applicants job education and training needed to increase employment success. For its efforts, the organization received \$10,000.
- Project Sanctuary Therapeutic Retreats, of Parker, Colo., helps families reconnect following lengthy separations and deployments. The program begins with a free, five night therapeutic retreat using recreation as a form of diversion therapy. Project Sanctuary families enjoy year-round activities, such as hiking, skiing, horseback riding and sledding, in the Colorado Rocky Mountain region. This program received \$10,000 to continue its efforts.
- Operation Building Hope, of Fuquay-Varine, N.C., equips wounded veterans with a handicap-accessible home. The program uses an all-volunteer work force to construct and install ramps and rails, modify bathrooms, lower countertops and widen doorways. The program, created by the Military Missions in Action organization, received \$10,000.
- Books on Bases, Smiles on Faces, of Alexandria, Va., supplies books to military families to assist them in developing their children's reading skills. Blue Star Families Inc. created this program, which received an \$8,000 award.
- Kids Blossom through Gardening is a program created by the Dover Air Force Base Key Spouse Club of Dover, Del., to enhance the health and wellness of airmen and their families by decreasing overweight and obesity through community gardening. This program received a \$2,000 award.

"It's a humbling thing to stand in the Hall of Heroes," said Daniel Nichols, executive director of Military to Medicine, upon receipt of his award. "It's also a humbling thing to have the privilege to serve people whose ordinary lives are transformed by extraordinary circumstance, as in the case of our military families."

Including this year's awards, the annual competition has recognized 133 programs with awards totaling \$650,000 since its inception in 1999.

Mullen Seeks End to 'Yes-No' Box on Predeployment Checklists

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Aug. 2, 2010 - The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff vowed today to eliminate the "yes-no" box that appears on some predeployment checklists that determines whether a servicemembers' units can contact their families during deployments.

"There are just too many spouses whose spouse deploys where that box is checked no," Navy Adm. Mullen said while addressing the National Guard Family Program Volunteer Workshop in New Orleans. "In my time as chairman, I'm going to make that box go away."

On some predeployment family readiness checklists, servicemembers can opt out of keeping their family members informed about family readiness information, benefits and entitlements.

The eradication of the "yes-no" box will require a joint effort, the chairman said. "This has to be actively pursued from within," he said, "from the grassroots level up to the commanders so that we can make it go away."

This effort will be a step toward keeping families better informed, and also will help to close a gap, particularly for Guard and Reserve families who often are far from the support of a military installation, Mullen said, noting that when his wife, Deborah, was visiting a base, a National Guard spouse drove six hours to see her.

The military needs to find ways to deal with that type of isolation, the chairman said.

The military has a plethora of programs aimed at supporting military families, but the number of programs isn't as important as the quality, Mullen noted. "I don't need any more programs," he said. "I need the ones we have to really be working really well."

Mullen also spoke of the need to provide better support to military children, particularly in the nation's schools. Training is needed to equip teachers to deal with the emotional impacts of deployments, war, and in some cases, loss, he said. In many cases, teachers are unaware of a student's military ties until someone actively interacts with them to try and close the gap, he added.

The need for outreach is widespread, Mullen said, citing an example of chaplains reaching out to community churches.

"I would hope that our programs from a military standpoint run in parallel and support community-based programs," he said.

America will be better able to overcome challenges within the military, particularly on

the veteran side, if "we join hands" between the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and communities, Mullen said.

Military leaders also can play a role by reaching out to community members who want to help but don't always know how to connect with the military, the chairman added.

"There are many, many more things to do," he said. "While we've done a great deal, we cannot rest on our laurels. [We must] stay focused in listening to our families."

Depression Symptoms



Depression is something that millions of Americans struggle with every day, and Soldiers are not immune. It cannot be ignored and, if left untreated, depression can have devastating results.

Depression is not just a Soldier-specific disease, and even some of the most seemingly happy people in the world are also living in emotional darkness. Recently, several Major League Baseball players have come forward and admitted they suffer from the same signs and symptoms of depression that are often found in Soldiers (Sports Illustrated, June 21, 2010). The reasons for the depression are vastly different, but the disorder does not discriminate. Soldiers should not feel isolated for having depression when in fact it's more common than they think.

Leaders, it's your job to recognize the signs, get help and provide the assistance your Soldiers need in order to combat this aggressive disease.

So what is depression? Depression is different from the emotion of sadness.

Think of it as disease. The illness of Depression affects the chemistry in the brain that deal with emotions. It is defined as a mood disorder when at least five of the following symptoms are exhibited most of the time for a period of two weeks or more:

- A depressed mood (feeling sad, worthless, hopeless, "down in the dumps") most of the time
- Lack of interest/not being able to enjoy activities, people, places or things you once enjoyed
- A significant weight loss or weight gain
- A significant change of sleep habits
- Agitation or restlessness, or a decrease in activity levels
- Feelings of worthlessness
- A diminished ability to think or concentrate; indecisiveness
- Excessive fatigue/loss of energy
- Excessive guilt
- Recurrent thoughts of death

- General thoughts of suicide or a concrete suicidal plan/attempt

The key for depression, as in most diseases, is early detection followed by swift and effective intervention. Treatment consists of therapy, medication or a combination of both. If you, or one of your Soldiers, exhibit any of these signs or symptoms, you need to take action. Visit your nearest military, VA, or civilian behavioral health system. The RSC Regional Directors of Psychological Health is also a resource for commanders.

Whenever there are indications of severe distress, go to the nearest emergency room immediately.

For more information, go to: www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org Or Contact the 24 hour hotline by phone: 1-800-342-9647 OR 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Intervention Hotline - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



The national suicide prevention lifeline is a free, 24-hour crisis intervention hotline (1-800-273-TALK (8255)) and online service (www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) provided by the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The service is available to anyone in suicidal Crisis or emotional distress, to include military members and their families including active duty, National Guard, and Reserve service members, Individual Ready Reserve, and Individual Mobilization Augmentees.

Credentialed consultants Offer confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week/365 days a year through phone or online consultation.

Military OneSource (MOS) <http://www.militaryonesource.com> provides support, information, and referrals to professionally trained consultants on a wide range of issues - from budgeting and investing to relationships and deployment.

Additionally, MOS can assist with arranging up to 12 free, face-to-face, short term counseling sessions for soldiers and family members. MOS contact information: from the u.s., 1-800-342-9647; outside the U.S., (country access code) 800-342-9647 (dial all 11 numbers) or call collect from outside the U.S., 484-530-5908; tty/ttd, 800-346-9188 (hearing impaired); or en Espanola, llame al 1-877-888-0727.

Career Boost Available for Those Leaving ADOS, De-Mobilizing or In Drill Status



Are you one of the 5,000 Army Reserve Soldiers currently on ADOS orders?

Are you one of the 24,000 Army Reservists serving on mobilization orders?

Or are you in a reserve status and looking to advance your civilian career?

If any one of these describes you, the Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces is available to give you an edge.

The Employer Partnership connects Reserve Soldiers with employers. These employers are military-friendly. They've joined the partnership because they need your skills and want to hire you.

The Employer Partnership portal (www.employerpartnership.org) features a web-based job search engine which gives service members a connection to our Employer Partners. There are more than 1,000 partners participating - and the search engine accesses approximately 500,000 position listings. Through the portal you also have access to assistance through program support managers and other resources such as resume writing tips.

The employers who have signed with the Employer Partnership Program represent 95 of the 2010 Forbes "Fortune 500" companies. Our Employer Partners not only include large firms such as Amazon, Boeing, General Electric, Microsoft, and Wal-Mart but also many local, state, federal agencies and trade unions. And, because the Employer Partnership is teamed up with the Direct Employers Association, the career opportunities available from the portal represent nearly 90% of our Nation's Fortune 500 companies. The Employer Partnership can help you land a job in almost any major industry including healthcare, logistics, transportation, information technology, telecommunications, financial and law enforcement.

If you will be coming off active duty we encourage you to check out the Employer Partnership. What have you got to lose?

To learn more please visit: www.employerpartnership.org e-mail gethired@employerpartnership.org or call toll free 1-877-450-HIRE (4473)

Family Readiness



Family Readiness is an essential part of Soldier Readiness. Making sure the Soldiers, and their Families, have the help, resources and materials they need

is a top priority of Senior Leadership. The consequences of not having Family Readiness can be disastrous. The Family Care Plan is not only a big part of Family Readiness, but is also required by regulation.

Making sure each military family has set in place a Family Care Plan is essential to Soldier and Mission Readiness. A Family Care Plan, or FCP, prepares the Soldier and his or her Family in advance of the Soldier's deployment and is reassurance that everything is taken care of at home thus minimizing family-related stress and enabling the Soldier to concentrate more fully on the mission.

All Soldiers who have dependents and are either single, or part of a dual-military couple, must have a FCP. The FCP applies to Reserve Component Soldiers regardless of rank. Although they are not required to do so, Emergency-Essential DA Civilians are encouraged to prepare a FCP. Remember that Commanders are the sole approving authority of the Family Care Plans.

Soldiers must use the utmost care in designating Guardians for their family members. The Guardian should not be another Soldier who may be deployed or mobilized. The Guardians need to be available in the event of an emergency and able to perform their responsibilities for an extended period of time.

The Guardians must also sign a DA Form 5840-R Certificate of Acceptance as Guardian or Escort acknowledging their legal authority, and a Power of Attorney given by the Soldier to the appointed Guardian be in place to ensure the proper authority and important decisions can be made in the Soldier's absence.

Family Care Plans are essential to a Soldier's, and unit's, Readiness. FCPs are put in place so military Families have what they need and know where to get help, when the Soldier is not available. It is absolutely imperative that military Families be ready and prepared for whatever circumstances may arise, and it is the duty of the Leadership to make sure valid FCPs are in place.

To find out more about Family Care Plans, please click here:

<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/23881877>

New DSN Phone Number for Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline



This message is sent on behalf of the army surgeon general. It serves to inform of a change to the DSN phone number for the wounded soldier and family mem-

ber hotline within the Continental United States (CONUS) to DSN 421-3700 and outside the within the Continental United States (OCONUS) to DSN 312-421-3700. **The commercial phone number remains the same at 800-984-8523.**

Family Matters Blog: Website Helps Families 'Know Before You Go'

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Aug. 11, 2010 - A new American Forces Press Service Web special,

"Focus on Family: Know Before You Go" highlighting how military families prepare for and deal with deployments.

The special features a variety of stories, from single dads preparing to deploy to dual-military couples who will be deploying together. It also includes links to helpful information, including service-specific deployment resources.

The goal of the special is to help people "know before you go," and we hope you find it useful.

We'd also love to hear from you. If you have some tips that have helped your family prepare for or handle a deployment, don't hesitate to write in.

To comment on this blog, please visit the Family Matters blog, <http://afps.dodlive.mil>

Services, VA Use Technology for Stress, Resilience Outreach

By Lisa Daniel, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, June 22, 2010 - The military services and the Veterans Health Administration of the Veterans Affairs Department increasingly use digital technology to reach out to identify and treat servicemembers with traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The second-ranking officers of each of the four services and a senior VHA leader outlined for the Senate Armed Services Committee today the many programs and delivery methods they are using to reach servicemembers who may have mild brain injuries or PTSD.

Increasingly, they are turning toward the "virtual" intervention of the Internet and

digital technology, they said.

"This generation sometimes opens up much better through Skype" and other digital technology "than by sitting across the table" from a mental health care provider, said Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, Army vice chief of staff.

Some 780,000 soldiers have responded to the Army's Internet-based Global Accessing Tool to measure resilience, and the service plans to expand its Web outreach, Chiarelli said. Also, the Army uses an Internet-based mental health screening to assess soldiers returning from deployments, he said.

Building on their department's suicide hotline, VA officials last year started an Internet-based chat line for servicemembers to discuss stress, said Dr. Robert L. Jesse, a physician and VHA's acting principal deputy undersecretary of health. "Younger folks are much more used to [chatting on the Internet and texting on phones] than having a phone conversation," he said.

Using consumer-based technology is increasingly important to reach servicemembers, not only because it's a medium they are comfortable with, but also because those not on active duty - National Guard and reserve members, and veterans who have separated from service - are widely dispersed and sometimes hard to reach, Chiarelli said, noting an increase in suicides among Guard members not on active duty.

The increasing use of technology also can help in getting around problems from the national shortage in mental health care workers. For example, Chiarelli said, it would be beneficial for a soldier at Fort Campbell, Ky., to be "seen" by a psychiatrist via Internet technology, rather than be driven 100 miles to Nashville to meet in person.

Besides the digitally based programs, the military officers outlined numerous ways their services are reaching out to troops and their families on issues such as traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide prevention. All of the services have increased awareness training, starting with new recruits, focusing heavily on noncommissioned officers, and extending to flag officers. All said they are doing pre- and post-deployment screening, and reaching out to families.

The Army, in a program with the University of Pennsylvania, has trained more than 1,200 soldiers to be resilience trainers to others, with plans to place them in every battalion, Chiarelli said.

The Navy has a program called ACT - ask, care, treatment, or "ask about your shipmate, care for your shipmate, and help him or her get treatment," said Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert, vice chief of naval operations. The service began 10 training workshops at 20 locations this year, and plans to open five more by fall. And, he said, more than

100 sailors have been trained to teach others about controlling stress.

"Stress is a fact of life, and we want to reframe the issue to one of stress control," Greenert said. The programs are designed "to build resilience to stress as part of a healthy lifestyle."

The Air Force has increased training and counseling, and held a "Wingman Day" in May to underscore that every airman, regardless of rank, needs to watch out for changes in others and reach out to them if they suspect they're not well, Gen. Carrol H. Chandler, Air Force vice chief of staff, said.

The Marine Corps, which has the most suicides per capita with 52 last year, recently created a hotline with the Tricare West military health plan, in which Marines and their families can call anonymously 24/7 to discuss stress, said Gen. James F. Amos, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps.

Also, Amos said, the Marines focus on both physical and mental resilience beginning at boot camp, and conduct pre-deployment immersion training to get young Marines accustomed to a combat environment.

"The best thing we can do for them is not only to get them physically fit, but we want our Marines to experience back home most of the fear, anxiety, confusion and fog of war before they deploy," Amos said.

**The next printed
Warrior Medic
Magazine will be
in the homes late
November, early
December.**



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

**US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USAMRICD)
US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID)
Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI)**

**Presents The
Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear (CBRN) Course
At the
116th AMSUS Convention / 2 – 4 November 2010**

The Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Course (CBRN) is conducted jointly by the US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USAMRICD), the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), and the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI).

The CBRN Course will be conducted at the AMSUS 116th Annual Meeting. The three-day mini-course will be held at the *Phoenix Convention Center, 100 N. Third Street, Phoenix, Arizona, USA 85004*. This course is an abbreviated version of a five-day course offered at the US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. This course, adapted specifically for AMSUS attendees, preserves the didactic core of the five-day course. Military and civilian healthcare providers, hospital administrators, and municipal disaster-response elements should find this course particularly relevant. The three days address the management of specific types of CBRN incidents with respect to a hospital environment. Continuing-education credits will be awarded based upon hours of attendance and participation. This course is in compliance with the Joint Commission (formerly JCAHO). **CME, CEU and CEH credits are available.**

This educational activity will be accredited for credit in category 1 credit(s) toward the *AMA PRA Category 1 credit(s)*[™]. Each physician should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This is the direct link to register:

https://ccc.apgea.army.mil/courses/In_house/brochureCBRNE_amsus_10.htm

For more information, contact the Chemical Casualty Care Division, USAMRICD at DSN 584-2230/3393, CML (410) 436-2230/3393, DSN FAX 584-3086, CML (410) 436-3086, by email at usamricdcccmail@amedd.army.mil, or by writing to Commander, USAMRICD, Attn: MCMR-CDM (Chemical Casualty Care Division), 3100 Ricketts Point Road, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5400.