

WARRIOR MEDIC

MONTHLY

An Army Reserve Medical Command Publication



Free Tutors Ease Homework Woes

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Last night, I sat down to help my daughter with her homework and very quickly realized I was in over my head. It's been a while since I took 3rd grade math and was hard-pressed to remember terms like place value, front-end estimation and common factors.

"Is that right?" she asked me, thrusting her worksheet under my nose. I had to hesitate for a moment before admitting I had no idea, and quickly delved into her math book to give myself a refresher.

I had a moment of panic as I realized I would have to relearn a whole host of complicated math terms in the years ahead. I think I desperately need a math refresher course for parents, or a very experienced tutor.

It was a tough evening for me, but I realized our military families have additional, weightier challenges. They frequently move, and must keep up with the different requirements of different teachers in each school. And when a parent deploys, the other must assume the sole role of homework helper along with a host of other responsibilities. And it's even tougher when both parents deploy.

Fortunately, the Defense Department offers military families access to free, online tutoring at Tutor.com. The site offers round-the-clock professional tutors who can assist with homework, studying and test preparation. Services are available to students of any age – from kindergartners to high school seniors – with help offered in more than 16 subjects.

Once online, the student and tutor work together in a secure virtual classroom, where they can chat, draw on a shared whiteboard, upload files and browse the Internet together.

Active-duty servicemembers, National Guard and reserve personnel on active duty in a deployed status, Defense Department civilians in a deployed status and their dependents are eligible to

participate. Families who aren't eligible can access the service for a fee.

People can sign up by visiting <http://www.tutor.com/military>.

Wikileaks Is Not Authorized

From an Army Reserve Command Leadership Message



As you may have seen on the news recently, a new cache of classified documents has been released on the WikiLeaks website.

As a security reminder to all Soldiers, individuals should not access the WikiLeaks web site to view, download, or print any information which is potentially classified. All personnel are reminded that the accessing of classified information on an unclassified network, either on government or privately owned computers, could constitute a security violation or place our national security at risk.

In accordance with Executive Order 13526, classified information shall not be declassified automatically as a result of any unauthorized disclosure and will remain classified until it is formally declassified by an appropriate authority. Therefore, information on the internet which is or appears to be classified should be handled as such until it is properly declassified. The unauthorized disclosure, unauthorized retention, or negligent handling of classified information may result in termination of security clearance, termination of employment, or prosecution.

Finally, personnel are reminded that the following of proper security procedures is an individual responsibility, and is not to be taken lightly.

STAFF



AR-MEDCOM Staff
Commander, AR-MEDCOM
 Maj. Gen. Robert J. Kasulke
Chief of Staff, AR-MEDCOM
 Col. Jerrell J. Cockrell
Command Sgt. Major, AR-MEDCOM
 Command Sgt. Maj. Roger B. Schulz
Chief, Public Affairs, AR-MEDCOM
 Lt. Col. William D. Ritter

Warrior Medic Monthly Staff:
Editor in Chief/Design and Layout/Writer:
 Lt. Col. William D. Ritter
NCOIC/Associate Editor/Writer:
 Master Sgt. Enid Ramos-Mandell

Other Contacts:
 AR-MEDCOM HQ, General Inquiries,
 (877) 891-3281, ARMEDCOM@usar.army.mil;
 AR-MEDCOM HQ, Emergency
 Operations Center, 727-563-3635/3949 or
 877-891-3281, ARMEDCOM.EOC@us.army.mil;
 Staff Duty Officer, 727-254-2099.

Warrior Medic is an unofficial publication authorized by Army Regulation AR 360-1. This is an authorized publication for members of the Army. Contents of Warrior Medic Magazine are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the Army Reserve Medical Command. It is written, edited and published by the Public Affairs Office, Army Reserve Medical Command, 2801 Grand Avenue, Pinellas Park, Fla. 33782; telephone number 1-877-891-3281, ext. 3730 or 3962; Fax (727) 563-3625. AR-MEDCOM PAO thanks those writers, photographers and publications listed in the byline credits for their contributions to this publication. Their material is copyrighted to their respective publications, and used with permission.

CHECK OUT AR-MEDCOM PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRODUCTS ON THE WEB:

<http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/armedcom>
<http://www.youtube.com/user/ARMEDCOM>

<http://www.dvidshub.net/units/AR-MEDCOM>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/armedcom>

Domestic Abuse: Don't Suffer in Silence

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Several years ago, I interviewed a noncommissioned officer for the base paper where I was stationed. He very bravely had agreed to talk about his experiences with domestic abuse in hopes of raising awareness of the problem.

He told me how his temper would flare up at his wife and how he would get physically aggressive with her. His anger would rage out of control, he told me, and it was difficult to suppress.

But rather than continue down a destructive path, this servicemember opted to get help. He sought assistance through the base family advocacy program and, through counseling, found the help he needed to deal with his anger and the underlying causes for his abuse. He accepted responsibility, found help early on and continued on to have a successful career and a healthy marriage.

I thought that took a lot of guts. He conveyed a strong message that it's never too late to seek help, whether you're the perpetrator or the victim.

The Defense Department is observing Domestic Violence Awareness Month this month by stepping up efforts to bring awareness to this pervasive issue and the resources available to prevent it.

Domestic abuse, which encompasses physical and emotional abuse, has a devastating impact, robbing people of their self-esteem and, in the worst cases, their lives.

National statistics indicate that one in four women will become a victim of domestic violence within her lifetime, and on average, more than three women and one man are murdered by their intimate partners in this country each day.

Within the military, despite a decade of war and the associated stressors, there has been a steady decline in the number of domestic-abuse cases reported to the family-advocacy program since 2000, from 19,479 total reports in 2000 to 15,939 total reports in 2008.

That speaks to the effectiveness of the military's prevention and education efforts. Still, there are thousands of cases and even one case is too many. We need to wipe out this silent destroyer of lives and families.

The first step, officials advise, is to seek help as soon as possible, whether it's reaching out to a victim advocate, health care provider, military family life consultant or chaplain. Families also have access to round-the-clock counseling and problem-solving support through Military OneSource by calling 1-800-342-9647 or online at <http://www.militaryonesource.com>.

www.militaryonesource.com.

People also can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). Servicemembers and their families stationed overseas can call the American Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center toll free internationally at 1-866-USWOMEN or visit <http://www.866uswomen.org>.

If there's a threat of danger, victims can contact the commander and request a military protective order or request one from a civilian court.

People who suspect someone they know is being abused should contact military law enforcement, the family advocacy program or the servicemember's command.

It takes an enormous amount of courage to seek help, whether you're the perpetrator or the victim, but it's well worth it in the long run. It could save your life or the life of someone you love.

Above all, don't suffer in silence. Whether you're trying to catch a problem early on or the abuse is deeply rooted in your relationship, it's never too late to get help.

Program Easing Medical Separation Rolls Out Forcewide

By Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - A pilot program that eases medical separation and speeds benefit payments for servicemembers too wounded, sick or injured to stay in the military will soon roll out to the entire force.

"We are proud that the disability evaluation system is making progress," a senior defense official said this week. "Our people are committed to not only expanding this faster disability system, but we are just as committed to making it even faster and fairer for our transitioning service men and women - our work here is not done."

John R. Campbell, defense deputy undersecretary for wounded warrior care and transition policy, said the Integrated Disability Evaluation System is a joint effort between the Defense and Veterans Affairs departments.

"The events in February 2007 around Walter Reed ... triggered the DOD and the VA to really take a look at what they had been doing," Campbell said during an interview this week. "That process then continued ... to where we are today."

The program will expand to all military medical sites across the services by October 2011, he said.

In the past, separating servicemembers

got end-of-service physicals and final military treatment from local military medical clinics while still on active duty. After separation, troops seeking disability compensation would have to repeat the same examinations at VA facilities, and then wait weeks or months for a disability determination before they could request disability benefits.

"The legacy system ... had both DOD and VA as components, and the VA started only after the DOD [evaluation] was complete. So it took up to 540 days for the whole disability evaluation system to work," Campbell said.

The new program brings together VA and military medical separation processes while servicemembers are still on active duty.

Under the new system, wounded, ill or injured servicemembers receive medical evaluations by VA-certified doctors using VA guidelines, while DOD uses these exams to determine if a servicemember is able to continue in uniform.

The pilot program has been operating in 27 sites, and Campbell said the system now takes about 300 days to evaluate servicemember disabilities.

For servicemembers, the process is faster -- with only one set of examinations to complete -- and fairer than the previous system, Campbell said, with all evaluations done through one set of protocols.

Campbell said the net result for medically separated servicemembers is they can receive a disability rating while still on active duty, and receive disability compensation after their first full month in veteran status, the soonest allowable by law.

Results from the test sites have been great, he said.

"We're getting much higher satisfaction ratings ... from discharged servicemembers and their families," Campbell said. "[They say] this system is just far superior to the legacy system."

DOD Website Helps Young People Plan Futures

By Cheryl Pellerin, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - A new Defense Department website gives military service equal billing with colleges and careers for people ages 16 to 24 who are exploring options for their futures, the program director said yesterday.

DOD's Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies program announced the launch of Myfuture.com, which has information on more than 1,000 military and civilian careers and nearly 7,000 accredited colleges, universities and trade schools, Matt

Boehmer told the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service.

“The proportion of youth who tell us they’ve never considered the military is at the highest rate we’ve ever seen,” Boehmer said, noting that traditional college- and career-planning websites rarely offer information about military service.

“The Myfuture.com website aims not only to inform but to interest youth who may never have considered military service,” he said.

The website is a central resource for information on college admission requirements, employment trends and military benefits, Boehmer added. It provides advice about preparing academically for college, landing a first job interview and preparing for military basic training.

“By placing the military side by side with college and career opportunities, the website allows them to explore all possibilities and gain insight into each option,” Boehmer said. “We also make the point that the three do not have to be mutually exclusive.”

DOD produces the site using data from the departments of Commerce, Education and Labor.

The website is being advertised on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, Boehmer said. The YouTube site features two songs written for Myfuture.com and performed by Brooklyn rapper DeStorm Power.

“We need to go out where the kids are, and that today is social media,” Boehmer said. “Instead of having them come to us, what we’ve decided to do is go to them and engage the youth in their own environment.”

Myfuture.com has been live for several months, he said, and the number of users has risen steadily. The military information pages have had 100,000 page views so far, and more than 3,000 visitors have created accounts on the website.

“Even though the site has only been up for a short time,” Boehmer said, “we feel those are great signs of success.”

Free Corporate Mentoring Program for Returning Soldiers

From an Army Reserve Command Leadership Message



There is a unique program, American Corporate Partners (ACP), available to assist veterans in advancing their civilian careers. All Army Reserve Soldiers who have served in OIF/OEF are eligible to participate in ACP.

American Corporate Partners is a nationwide mentoring program that matches

employees from some of the nation’s largest corporations and universities with OIF/OEF veterans for the purpose of mentoring, networking, and career counseling. Transitioning from military service to the civilian sector can be difficult but ACP is dedicated to assisting veterans develop the valuable relationships, key skills and action plans needed for success in private enterprise. This program is free of charge to those who have served in the US armed forces.

ACP’s 28 participating institutions include some of the finest companies and universities in the country: Aon, AT&T, Bloomberg, Campbell Soup, Deloitte, Energy Future Holdings, General Dynamics, General Electric, Goldman Sachs, Harvard University, Hewlett-Packard, Home Depot, IBM, JP Morgan Chase, Kansas State University, Liberty Mutual, MacAndrews & Forbes, Morgan Stanley, News Corporation, Omnicom, PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Siemens, Travelers, The University of Oklahoma, The University of Texas, URS, and Verizon.

ACP is currently active in 17 cities across the country: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Hartford, Houston, Los Angeles, Manhattan/Topeka, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Raleigh/Durham, San Antonio, San Francisco and Washington, DC. For soldiers who live outside of these areas, ACP offers a robust E-Mentoring program.

While not a “jobs program,” ACP aims to strengthen the relationship between America’s leading corporations and universities and those who have served our country.

American Corporate Partners’ program is competitive and not everyone who applies will be selected. Since its inception more than two years ago, 70% of the programs applicants have been Army or Army Reserve veterans. To learn more about the program or to apply online, please visit www.acp-usa.org

American Corporate Partners may be contacted at info@acp-usa.org

The Employer Partnerships Launches Powerful, Easy-to-use Job Search Tool

From an Army Reserve Command Leadership Message



A state-of-the-art Web portal has launched and it’s here to help Veterans, Reserve-Component members, their families and Wounded Warriors land jobs with civilian employers. The user-friendly tools will enhance the Employer Partnership (EP) of the Armed

Forces program by making it easier for both job hunters and employers seeking their skills. The new portal simplifies the job application process by allowing users to set up a personal profile and maintain a record of their job searches and search parameters. That means users don’t have to start from square one each time they enter the system, saving them time and eliminating inconvenience. In addition, a resume builder helps users create a resume and maintain it in the system, and they can even set an alert function that notifies them when particular job announcements are posted.

It’s easy to register, and once you add your resume to the system, employers may even find you. You’ve got nothing to lose, register today: <http://employerpartnership.org>

DOD Expands Community-based Child Care Options

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - The Defense Department will launch an initiative early next year aimed at expanding the quality and quantity of community-based child care options for geographically dispersed reserve and active-duty families and for families facing long waits for on-base care.

Through the initiative, DOD will work with federal agencies, state officials and child care centers and programs to raise the quality of care within communities, which should translate to an increased child care capacity for military families, Barbara Thompson, director of the Pentagon’s office of family policy/children and youth, explained.

“We know child care is a work force issue,” Thompson said. It’s vital “not just for our deployed servicemembers, but for our servicemembers who are here working long shifts, that they know their children are taken care of, that they are in a high-quality, developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment.”

The initiative will be introduced as a two-year pilot program in 13 states that share the same “quest for quality” as the DOD, she said.

The initiative has been in the works for several years, Thompson said, and arose out of an evident need. When seeking more child care options for Guard and Reserve families, DOD officials conducted an analysis of the quality of licensing requirements across the nation and found a lack of nationally accredited care and some “frightening” standards,” she said.

According to the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral

Agencies, just 8 to 10 percent of state child development facilities are accredited. Within the DOD, however, 98 percent of DOD child development programs are accredited.

"It's very hard for us to connect a military family with a program that we know is not developmentally appropriate and is not high quality," Thompson said. "We know how much it influences the well-being of children."

A lack of community-based care particularly impacts Guard and Reserve families, who typically are geographically separated from on-base care centers. "We have three things we know are critical: availability, affordability and quality," Thompson said.

Through the initiative, DOD officials will share lessons learned from the military child care system and also offer states support to improve the quality of the child care standards and oversight, she said.

The department will leverage its Joint Family Support Assistance Program teams — which include a child and youth behavior specialist and Military OneSource consultant — as one of many state partners interested in improving quality.

The department also will hire a state child care liaison who will work with state agencies, the state's Early Childhood Council, Health and Human Services, Head Start and the licensing bureau. The liaisons also will help to identify providers -- including schools, recreation programs and home-based care programs -- willing to take the steps needed to improve their quality. From there, the department will provide technical and training assistance, Thompson explained.

By doing so, there's an added benefit. Care not only is improved for military families, but for all children within the program, she said.

Those programs that meet the DOD's standards will be added to the list of approved providers, and the department will buy down the cost of care for military families.

Officials will track quality improvements through an evaluation of child care licensing standards and the state quality rating and improvement system, Thompson said. Once the two-year pilot program is over, officials will evaluate its success and lessons learned, she said.

Officials had specific criteria in mind when selecting the 13 states for the pilot program, Thompson said. They chose some states based on the lack of an active-duty installation, such as Vermont and Indiana, and others for their deployment impact and existing quality improvement rating systems, she said.

The 13 states selected to participate are Alaska, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Vermont and

Washington.

The initiative marks an extensive effort on DOD's part, Thompson noted. Officials conducted research to determine the most important quality indicators and to make sure they fully understood each state's licensing requirement, she said, and also had to develop a rating system that would work in a civilian community.

Officials also worked in collaboration with the Health and Human Services, Education, and Agriculture departments. "They opened a lot of very important doors for us," she said.

Thompson hopes the initiative will have a positive impact, not only for military families, but the nation as a whole.

"We're hoping to increase the availability of quality childcare for our military members and also help the United States in its endeavor to improve quality in early childhood environments across the nation," she said.

The message to military families, she added, is "we care about you and we care about the future of your children."

Handbook Helps Troops' Families, Friends

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - A new one-of-a-kind resource handbook and video is being made available to servicemembers' families and friends, courtesy of an independent film production company,

Vulcan Productions, owned by philanthropist Paul G. Allen. The handbook and video aim to help families and friends prepare for the emotional challenges encountered before, during and after deployment.

The handbook is being distributed through the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. Read more about this project.

To order a handbook, go to:
<http://www.realwarriors.net/materials/order/PBSHandbook.php>

The Army Reserve is Moving to Electronic Medical Records.

From an Army Reserve Command Leadership Message



The electronic records will improve health care for Soldiers. Going digital will help provide answers to medical professionals fast and effectively, and will ultimately help Soldiers to get the

quick health care service they need.

By putting medical records online and accessible to medical professionals, it will put an end to the delay and confusion that can come with paper records at the mobilization platform. Where once a healthcare provider would have to scroll through pages just to figure out what happened to a Soldier, that provider can now access the Soldier's online records within a few minutes, saving time, money and avoid unnecessary repeat procedures to get answers.

The Health Readiness Record (HRR) does a lot more than just store profiles; HRR actually stores a digital copy of a RC Soldier's hard-copy Service Treatment Record (STR). Hardcopy medical documents are easily scanned and placed into HRR (relative to AHLTA). Once scanned, the document is tagged by the date of service (DOS) and type of Document. This allows you to batch-load several pages at one time and then properly index or place them into the record. The access to HRR is role restricted so that confidentiality is maintained.

If a Reserve Component Soldier is identified as medically not ready for deployment; the Electronically Profiling System (E-Profile) allows for profiles to be written, signed and tracked within HRR. Anything done in e-Profile is automatically rolled into that Soldier's HRR. Combined E-Profile and HRR make for the ideal platform for tracking medically non-deployable Soldiers.

HRR will have a case management/specialty referral module, and eventually will be integrated and used in the medical adjudication process. The MOS Medical Retention Board is just one example.

HRR will greatly increase the care that our Soldiers are being provided.

Instead of waiting for the records to arrive, the hospital staff will now know who the patient is, their wounds, medical history, and even the surgeons and specialists they've seen in the past within minutes of them coming through the door.

The transition to digital medical records provides easier access to records, no confusing and often misleading paper trail, and better care for Soldiers.

Researchers Aim to Bring Smart Phones to Warfighters

By Christen N. McCluney, Emerging Media, Defense Media Activity



WASHINGTON - Army researchers are working to develop smart-phone technology to aid warfighters in tactical environments.

In a Nov. 30 "DOD Live"

bloggers roundtable, Tony Fiuza of the Army Research, Development and Engineering Command's communications-electronics center described ongoing efforts that include a program called MACE -- short for "multi-access communications extender" -- which develops a tactical communications infrastructure that can support bringing smart phones to the battlefield.

"This is a huge challenge in that we have a security challenge for the communications network and the devices themselves," he said.

A separate effort is under way to develop applications for those devices, Fiuza said. Security involving the applications is important, he said, and researchers are working on architectural issues that come into play with downloading the applications and making sure they are secure and free of viruses or malicious code.

Another issue is figuring out the concept of operation, he added -- will every soldier receive a device, and when will they be allowed to use it?

"We're just starting to look at what can you do with the smart phone and [to] leverage all the research that's been done on the commercial wireless side and adapt that to a military environment that is much more austere than the commercial environment," he said.

Large cell towers are readily available in the commercial market, Fiuza said, but Army researchers are looking at more tactical and mobile solutions in working to bring the technology to austere tactical environments.

"You want to be able to take that same kind of capability and bring it down to something the size of a small dormitory refrigerator or even smaller, with an antenna that you can mount inside a vehicle or that you can mount using a transit case, and have that be your base station," he explained.

The mobile capability would provide local connectivity between cell phones and smart phones and also provide a server for applications, Fiuza said. That base station would then be connected to a military network or to other base stations.

"We're working with various organizations across the Army and [the Defense Department] to try and frame what we can do and what we should do, and using our tech development money to develop a capability that can be used on tactical battlefields safely."

Fiuza said he hopes that the researchers can demonstrate within a year a smart-phone capability on a tactical network tied to a mobile network that's tied to a military backbone.

"Our goal is to then have that capability set at a baseline, and then bring in new capability as it is provided by commercial industry," he said.

"Initially we're probably going to focus on 3G technology as it comes in, and bring that capability in as a baseline," he said. Then, as the commercial side evolves to LTE -- which is the 4G version, which is a very different technology -- let's try and pull that into what we're doing in MACE, evolve MACE and bring that in quickly."

Fiuza said that the plan is to work with the initial start-up and continue to evolve the capability as technology evolves on the commercial side.

"As new technologies come out on the commercial side, we want to quickly bring them in, adapt it to what we want to do on the military side and then deploy it," he said.

Instead of developing phones, Fiuza said, the plan is to use commercial smart phones and modify them as needed to make them more rugged on the exterior. "We're taking a very broad view of it," he said. "We're not saying we've got to design our own military-specific cell phone."

Researchers are bringing great focus to the effort, Fiuza told the bloggers.

"It's an area we're committed to," he said. "It's something we're going to be doing for a very long time, but the focus is we want to make sure we do this intelligently."

Suicide Survivors Turn to TAPS for Support

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - I was hard-pressed to hold back my tears last week as I spoke to several amazing women who had lost a military loved one to suicide.

They told me their stories in a hotel lobby, surrounded by strangers who were rushing past to meetings or hauling luggage to their rooms. But they barely noticed, lost in memories that triggered laughter, and tears, as they scratched away at the surface of their terrible loss.

These women, along with more than 200 other family members, had traveled to Alexandria, Va., for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors Suicide Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp. TAPS is a nonprofit organization dedicating to helping survivors of fallen military loved ones.

This seminar is the second one TAPS has dedicated to suicide survivors, and participants range from parent to spouse, sibling to battle buddy, but all lost a military loved one to suicide, some as recently as a week ago.

One of the women I spoke to, Miranda Kruse, had lost her Navy husband to suicide nearly five years ago after a long-term struggle with anxiety and depression. He was the "love of my life," she told me.

After his death, Kruse was gripped by the isolation and loneliness that so often follows a suicide. Her family and friends didn't know what to say to her or how to offer her support. Depressed and alone, she barely left her house for two years.

"Loneliness is so horrible after a suicide," she said, her eyes welling up with tears. "There's such a stigma and everyone wants to point a finger."

She eventually turned to TAPS, and found the comfort and support she so desperately needed. TAPS is founded on the concept of survivors helping survivors, and trains survivors who are a few years out from their loss to become mentors to others. And seminars, like the one Kruse was attending, offer an opportunity for people to learn coping skills from experts and, more importantly, form lasting bonds and support. TAPS "got me back on my feet again," she said.

Kruse is now committed to helping others avoid the same loneliness she felt in the days, and years, following her husband's death.

As we spoke, one of Kruse's best friends rushed up to her along with Kruse's three children, who picked at the plate of sandwiches and fruit she had gathered for them earlier. They gathered close, a newfound family, and a far cry from the isolation she had described just moments ago.

Near Kruse sat Judy Swenson, who had flown up from Texas to attend the seminar. Like Kruse, Swenson had suffered a similar terrible loss several years ago.

Her son, Army Spc. David P. Swenson Jr., mired in debt and depression, took his own life about five years ago.

The soldier had driven to his sister-in-law's house one night and his superior had called Swenson looking for him. She went to talk to him and explained he'd be absent without leave, or AWOL, if he didn't return that night. He told her he missed his old unit -- he had recently transferred to a new one -- and was just too tired to return.

Swenson talked to him of duty and responsibility and he conceded and left that night. That was the last time she saw him alive.

"One of the hardest things -- and there are many things that are hard -- is my son begged me, 'Please don't make me go back,' she said, the sadness and regret so evident in her eyes.

Her son shot himself that night.

Swenson was seized by grief and sought help from TAPS. TAPS is her family now, she said.

"TAPS is where I can talk about Davy," she said. "People care; they didn't know him, but they care. It's not just lip service -- it's heart. There's nothing like it anywhere."

Bonnie Carroll, TAPS founder, called the organization a "safe place." "This is

our home, our reunion, our chance to be together," she said.

For more on these amazing women and the TAPS seminar they attended, read my American Forces Press Service article, "Suicide Survivors Find Comfort With TAPS."

For more information, go to:
<http://www.taps.org/>

Smart Phone App Helps Track Post-Deployment Emotional Health



The Department of Defense announced today the release of a free smart phone mobile application that will make it easier for servicemembers and veterans to track their emotional health after deployments.

The National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2) developed the T2 Mood Tracker to help users monitor trends of emotions and behaviors from therapy, medication, daily experiences and changes in their environment such as work and home. It can be downloaded through <http://www.t2health.org/apps/t2-mood-tracker>.

"Therapists and physicians often have to rely on patient recall when trying to gather information about symptoms over the previous weeks or months. Research has shown that information collected after the fact, especially about mood, tends to be inaccurate," said Perry Bosmajian, a psychologist with T2. "This application can improve the quality of the treatments for the provider and the patient. The best record of an experience is when it's recorded at the time and place it happens."

The T2 Mood Tracker can record emotional experiences from a few days to several months to see results over time, and the information can also be shared with therapists and physicians to monitor a patient's behavior throughout treatment.

The application is now available for smart phones using the Android operating system. It is expected to be available for iPhone users early next year.

Program Fills Gap for Returning Guard, Reserve

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Though the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program has eased the post-deployment process for thousands of Guard and Reserve members and their families over the past two years, officials are hoping thousands more

take advantage of the Defense Department program in the coming months, the program's executive director said.

"Anecdotally, we know we're under 20 percent participation," Glenn F. Welling Jr. said in an interview with American Forces Press Service. "That's a shame. There's a cost to this program, but that pales in comparison to the cost of a broken home, failed employment experience, a suicide -- all of those things."

The Defense Department launched the program in 2008 to ensure reserve-component servicemembers have access to the information and resources they need to reintegrate with their families, their communities and their employers effectively, Welling said. A need for a customized service became apparent as increased numbers of Guard and Reserve members were deployed overseas after 9/11, he said.

Over the past decade, more than 787,000 reserve-component servicemembers have been called to duty, and more than 100,000 are deployed or on active duty orders on any given day. But unlike their active-duty counterparts who return to the extensive support of an installation after deployment, Guard and Reserve members return to communities that may not understand the depth of their experience and to families that may be unfamiliar with military demands, Welling explained.

Yellow Ribbon helps to ensure geographical separation from the military doesn't equate to emotional or social isolation, he said.

To reach every servicemember regardless of distance, Yellow Ribbon coordinators sponsor Yellow Ribbon events across the nation and U.S. territories, with more than 500 scheduled to take place in the first half of fiscal 2011, Welling said. The Texas National Guard, for instance, held its largest event to date this weekend in Houston, with about 1,800 soldiers of the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and their families in attendance.

In fiscal 2011, about 2,000 Yellow Ribbon events are projected to take place, he said.

DOD has oversight of the program, but each service has the latitude to tailor the program to suit service-specific resources and needs. All are required to offer events before, during and after deployment: one at the alert phase, one during the deployment, and three post-deployment at 30, 60 and 90 days out. A core DOD curriculum ensures that all families receive the same basic information wherever they're located.

Predeployment events, which family members are strongly encouraged to attend, set the stage for a successful deployment experience, Welling said, and include topics such as financial management, stress and anger management, suicide prevention, health

benefits, powers of attorney and wills. These events also cover re-employment rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

"The more we're able to do up front, the more successful we are preparing people, the greater the likelihood of a successful reintegration on the back end," he said.

Events held during deployments focus on providing family members — whether spouse, parents, grandparents, roommates or best friends — with a support network, and on laying the groundwork for a successful reintegration. These events also give families a platform to discuss shared experiences and challenges, Welling said.

Reintegration takes center stage at the 30- and 60-day post-deployment events. Servicemembers and their families work on communication, relationships and how to ensure a smooth transition back to civilian communities and jobs. Most Army Reserve Yellow Ribbon events, for example, feature a "Coming Home" session that focuses on communication skills, including ways to adjust to a civilian "language" that may, after a year, sound foreign.

Servicemembers must be mission oriented while in uniform, but the same driven, mission focus that makes them so successful in the battlefield doesn't always translate to their civilian career field, explained Army Lt. Col. Cynthia Rasmussen, psychological director for the Army Reserve's 88th Regional Support Command and a Yellow Ribbon presenter.

"They may go to their job and get counseled for being curt with the people they work with, or go home and get in an argument over the way they speak to their spouse or kids," she said. "We have sessions that teach them the communication skills they need to be successful."

The 90-day event is geared for servicemembers, and is primarily intended to ensure they complete the post-deployment health reassessment. As the final event, it "offers the last formal pulse check on a servicemember's physical and emotional health prior to being re-assimilated back to the military, community and to life in general," Welling said.

Many events offer child care, as well as a youth program that teaches reintegration skills through age-appropriate activities, such as journaling or art. "We're not just providing a babysitting service, but we're engaging those kids," he said.

Chaplains and military family life consultants typically are present to guide discussions and to offer an ear to a servicemember or family member looking to unload.

"The deployment experience will change you, and it will change your family, your loved ones," Welling said. "It's a big deal. But when prepared for correctly, the majority of stressors can be managed in

such a way that newfound confidence skills, the ability to react under stress and pressure, can be very positive traits.”

Among future efforts, Welling said, the Yellow Ribbon program will put a greater emphasis on job creation and employer support, working hand in hand with Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a DOD organization that promotes cooperation and understanding between reserve-component members and their civilian employers.

In today's economy, job concerns are common, he said. A soldier who worked in construction when he deployed may not find work upon his return. But this same soldier also has a tremendous ability to lead and make solid decisions, and is reliable, smart and drug-free -- “all of those things that make our Guard and Reserve such great employees,” Welling said. Future events will put an emphasis on including potential employees and spotlighting job preparedness.

Meanwhile, Welling said, he hopes more people will be encouraged to attend Yellow Ribbon events. While services are required to offer events, they're not required to make them mandatory. That discretion is left to individual units and commanders.

“We have a buy-in at the highest levels,” he said. “But the unit-level leadership needs to hear about the value of this program. There's always a competition for people's time, but this is an investment -- an investment in their people that will reap significant benefits for them, their soldiers and their command.”

The feedback from participants speaks volumes as to the benefits, Welling said.

“It's powerful to go to an event and hear the testimonials and see how people's lives are being changed,” he said. “Many said they didn't want to come, but leave saying they need to tell their friends they need to go.”

“People have told me that this is the best thing the reserves have ever done,” he added. “People have told me that if we would have had this before, they wouldn't be divorced, or having issues. Those are powerful statements, and very rewarding for me to hear.”

For more on this program or to locate a Yellow Ribbon event, visit <http://www.yellowribbon.mil>.

NSPS Office Reaches Milestone in Transition

By Cheryl Pellerin, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Three-quarters of employees under the outgoing National Security Personnel System have transitioned to the General Schedule system, the

head of the office in charge of the massive effort said today.

John H. James Jr., director of the NSPS Transition Office, told American Forces Press Service that the milestone was reached by Sept. 30, as scheduled.

About 165,000 of 228,000 affected employees have made the transition out of NSPS.

“It has gone well,” James said. “Initially we met with the [Defense Department] components and my staff to come up with a plan for transitioning, updating the information technology system and putting in place project plans and information to inform employees about the transition.”

Congress directed a repeal of NSPS and set the timeline for its completion. By law, NSPS terminates on Jan. 1, 2012.

In the meantime, to assist employees in becoming familiar with the GS system, the NSPS website that offers information and training tools, including “GS-101,” an application that James said has been named as a best practice by the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit organization based here.

“The services and the [media] have been communicating down to the field activities and the other components,” James said. “At the local level, those organizations have been holding commander's calls, webinars and brown-bag lunches to make sure employees have an opportunity to sit down with their leadership to be informed about the process of transitioning out.”

The priority for the transition, he added, is a smooth process that ensures, as Congress mandated, that no employee loses pay due to the transition.

Each position in NSPS -- a system of broad pay bands that cover a range of duties and performance measures -- is classified in terms of the General Schedule system, a system of discrete pay grades that include regular pay increases, steps 1 through 10, based on performance.

“Once the classification is complete, an NSPS position is matched to a GS position,” James said. “If the employee's salary is between steps, the employee is awarded the higher step. If an employee is classified at a certain grade and they are below step 1 of that grade, the employee is awarded step 1 of that grade.”

Employees whose salaries are higher than step 10 of a grade receive what is called retained pay. That process, he added, “pretty much ensures that employees will not lose any money upon transition.”

“The General Schedule system is captured in law, and a part of that law dictates that you can't be paid above step 10 of your assigned grade,” James said.

If that occurs, he added, “the only authority we have to maintain your pay above step 10 of your assigned grade is pay retention. That regulation dictates that you

get to maintain your pay, but you're only authorized one half of a general pay increase authorized by Congress until the pay grade catches up with your salary.”

Over the next several months, James said, the transition office will maintain its efforts to monitor employees who are transitioning from NSPS, but it is also looking to the future.

“We're beginning to turn our focus to addressing the authorities in [the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act],” he said. These include designing a new performance management system, building hiring flexibilities into the new structure, and the possible creation of a civilian work force incentive fund that could be used to reward high-performing individuals and teams or to attract and retain employees.

“We've had our initial meeting with the unions in Los Angeles where we had a very diverse group of 200 attendees at the conference who had a voice in what the next system should look like,” James said.

“Our job now is to capture all that data and prepare for the design teams,” he added. “We will engage the labor unions again on what the design teams will look like -- the size, the theme, the scope -- and we will begin the effort of designing and developing the new authorities.”

VA Extends Coverage for Gulf War Veterans

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON - Veterans of the first Gulf War as well as current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan now have a smoother path toward receiving health-care benefits and disability compensation for nine diseases associated with their military service, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today.

A final regulation published in today's Federal Register relieves veterans of the burden of proving these diseases are service-related: Brucellosis, Campylobacter jejuni, Coxiella Burnetii (Q fever), Malaria, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, Nontyphoid Salmonella, Shigella, Visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

Shinseki added the new presumptions after reviewing a 2006 National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine report on the long-term health effects of certain diseases suffered among Gulf War veterans.

He also extended the presumptions to veterans of Afghanistan, based on NAS findings that the nine diseases are prevalent there as well.

The new presumptions apply to veterans who served in Southwest Asia beginning

on or after the start of Operation Desert Shield on Aug. 2, 1990, through Operation Desert Storm to the present, including the current conflict in Iraq. Veterans who served in Afghanistan on or after Sept. 19, 2001, also qualify.

For Shinseki, who pledged to honor the 20th anniversary of the Gulf War by improving health-care access and benefits for its 697,000 veterans, the new presumptions represent a long-overdue step in addressing the medical challenges many face.

"This is part of historic changes in how VA considers Gulf War veterans' illnesses," he said. "By setting up scientifically based presumptions of service connection, we give these deserving veterans a simple way to obtain the benefits they earned in service to our country."

The new presumptions initially are expected to affect just under 2,000 veterans who have been diagnosed with the nine specified diseases, John Gingrich, VA's chief of staff, told American Forces Press Service. He acknowledged that the numbers are likely to climb as more cases are identified.

With the final rule, a veteran needs only to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan during the specified time periods to receive disability compensation, subject to certain time limits based on incubation periods for seven of the diseases.

"It gives them easier access to quality health care and compensation benefits," Gingrich said. "The message behind that is that the VA is striving to make access to health care easier for our veterans who have served in our combat zones."

He expressed hope that by providing quick, easy access, VA will help veterans get the care they need early on, without having to fight the bureaucracy.

"When we find these presumptions and we reach out and get the veterans into our system, we can help them and give them the proper medical care they need, and maybe keep their disease from getting worse or getting it to go away altogether," he said.

It also will help eliminate the piles of paperwork and long claims adjudication process veterans had to go through to prove their cases to receive care and benefits. "This will help break the back of the backlog in the long run, while sending a reassuring message to veterans that the VA is there for them," Gingrich said.

He called the new presumptions part of Shinseki's effort to "create a culture of advocacy" within VA that builds trust as it reaches out to veterans.

For Gingrich, a Gulf War veteran himself, the effort is very personal. He remembers being deployed as a 1st Infantry Division field artillery battalion commander during Operation Desert Storm, when one of his officers became very sick with an illness nobody could diagnose.

"The medics couldn't diagnose it. We called in the doctors and they couldn't diagnose it. And eventually, he had to be medevaced back," he recalled. "And now here we are, 20 years later, and I saw him in Dallas in August, and he is still sick. You can't identify all the reasons and symptoms, but he is sick."

Veterans deserve better, Gingrich insisted. "I believe that our veterans that served in uniform for our country deserve the absolute best care and benefits that we can provide," he said.

VA provides compensation and pension benefits to more than 3.8 million veterans and beneficiaries, and received more than 1 million claims last year alone, VA officials reported. Veterans without dependents receive a basic monthly compensation ranging from \$123 to \$2,673.

Army Reserve Entering Uncertain Period

From an Army Reserve Command Leadership Message



"We are entering into a period of uncertainty," LTG Jack Stultz said as he addressed the attendees of the Center of Influence Town Hall Meeting on September 14th. Uncertainty with the draw-down in Afghanistan and the unsure state of the economy has illustrated a future that is riddled with questions.

The Chief of the Army Reserve and Commanding General of the Army Reserve Command recently addressed the future of the Army Reserve, highlighting some challenges he's preparing to face. Some of the main questions posed were:

What is the affect of the drawdown for the Army Reserve?

Will the Army Reserve face budget cuts?

How will command and control be managed in FY11 with the BRAC move?

With the drawdown, many Soldiers will have to adjust to being in a Garrison unit in an Operational Force, and that will require some restructuring when it comes to "business as usual." Leaders are going to have to make sure their Soldiers are properly trained and engaged.

The military will be facing budget cuts, so it will come down to a matter of choosing personnel or equipment. The goal is to not take away the services that we have, but to use those services more efficiently and cost-effectively.

With the massive move of all the major headquarters in the Army Reserve to take place next year, many events are being coordinated to make this possible. While buildings are being built at Fort Bragg, Civil

ians are making choices about their careers and the move. There is a period of massive transition headed for the Army Reserve headquarters. The move is targeted to be complete by September, 2011.

There are a lot of questions still being answered as we enter into a new fiscal year, but LTG Stultz is not disparaged. The Soldiers that make up our ranks are serving in twenty-two countries; changing lives, providing care and assistance, and making a difference to thousands of people all over the world. In light of all the upcoming changes, the Army Reserve continues to stay ready and relevant.

"I feel really good about where we are and the missions we're doing [around the world]. It's not just about Iraq and Afghanistan." LTG Stultz explained.

For more information on the Town Hall Meeting, click here:

<http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/NewsAndMedia/storiesfromthefront/Pages/ArmyReservePosturesfor%27Uncertain%27Future.aspx>

Stores & Services Offering Military Discounts

Go to <http://blog.bradsdeals.com/2010/09/22/160-stores-with-military-discounts/> to check for updates to this list.]

AR-MEDCOM Hosting A Commander's Training Workshop (CTW)

Attendees will receive vital information from select speakers and AR-MEDCOM staff on medical globalization enhancing preparedness for current and future missions, mobilizations, and/or deployments.

Additional events include Army Community Covenant Signing (ACCS), Army Reserve Family Programs Workshop (ARFPW), NCO Induction Ceremony and Semi-Formal Dinner, Commander Safety Council Meeting and a no-host social.

CTW events will take place at the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay Hotel, 2900 Bayport Drive, Tampa, FL 33607.

All personnel are expected to arrive no later than 1700, Thursday, February 10, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. and depart no earlier than Sunday, February 13, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.

For lodging reservations, utilize the following web site: <http://www.grandtampabay.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp?null>, or call: (813) 874-1234. Attendees must notify the hotel that they are making reservations for the "AR-MEDCOM Commanders

Training Workshop.”

Additionally, all attendees will complete a registration form and submit the form to the registration POC, Capt. Charles Cook, (727) 563-3840, email: charles.h.cook1@usar.army.mil.

If you are unsure if you are required to attend, contact AR-MEDCOM G3/5/7

POC, Lt. Col. Robert Baugher, (727) 563-3841, email: robert.baugher@usar.army.mil; or Maj. Patricia E. Smith, (727) 563-3804, email: patty.smith@usar.army.mil.

See you there!

Check out AR-MEDCOM Public Affairs products on the web:

Public Affairs Products are available at www.youtube.com/user/ARMEDCOM or www.Flickr.com/photos/armedcom or www.dvidshub.net/units/AR-MEDCOM

You can also follow us at http://twitter.com/AR_MEDCOM or visit our website at <http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/armedcom>



Behind every Soldier is a strong support team

Use them to prevent suicide

Counselor

Battle Buddies

Family

Chain of Command

Coach

Chaplain

Physician

www.militaryonesource.com | 1.800.342.9647

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK (8255)

