

# WARRIOR MEDIC

## MONTHLY

An Army Reserve Medical Command Publication



### Pre-activation Tri-care Benefits for National Guard and Reserve



From Tri-care website

National Guard and Reserve members who are issued delayed-effective-date active duty orders for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation may qualify for "early eligibility for TRICARE" beginning on the later of:

- the date their orders were issued; or
- 180 days before they report to active duty.

National Guard and Reserve members who qualify for the pre-activation benefit are covered as "active duty service members" and receive active duty medical and dental benefits.

Additionally, when National Guard or Reserve members qualify for pre-activation benefits, family members who are registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System are also covered under TRICARE up to 180 days before the sponsor's active duty service begins. Family members become covered by TRICARE as "active duty family members during the pre-activation period and while the sponsor is activated.

The member's Service personnel office will tell members if they are eligible for pre-activation benefits when they receive their delayed-effective-date active duty orders.

The Pre-activation medical benefits provides the same level of coverage that National Guard or Reserve Members and their family members will have when the sponsor is activated.

You may receive medical care either at a military treatment facility (MTF) or from a TRICARE network or participating provider. You will be required to enroll in one of the TRICARE Prime options (TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Prime Remote, TRICARE Prime Overseas or TRICARE Prime Remote Overseas) at your final duty station. Until then, any specialty care received outside of an MTF must be coordinated by the Military Medical Support Office (MMSO).

If you are eligible for pre-activation benefits, you will get care at either a military dental treatment facility or receive remote dental

care through the Active Duty Dental Program. Learn more...

If you are enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program at the time these pre-activation benefits become effective, you will be disenrolled automatically and will obtain dental care as noted above.

During the pre-activation period, family members become eligible for the TRICARE Dental Program at the lower active duty family member rate. Family members who are already enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program will see a reduction in their monthly premiums because they are considered "active duty family members" during the sponsor's active duty period.

If not already enrolled, family members may enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program with now at the reduced rates. Learn more about the TRICARE Dental Program.

<http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/overview/SpecialPrograms/PreActBenefitNGR>

### Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended



The deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to March 4, 2011, allowing personnel more time to apply for the benefits they've earned under the program guidelines.

The deadline extension is included in the continuing resolution signed by President Obama today, providing funding for federal government operations through March 4, 2011.

"There was a surge of applicants as we approached our earlier deadline, but there may still be more out there who have yet to apply," said Lernes Hebert, director, Officer and Enlisted Personnel Management. "We are pleased that this extension was included in the continuing resolution which will give those remaining the opportunity to apply as we continue to work through the current applications."

#### 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;  
 ARMEDCOM 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>

The RSLSP was established to compensate for the hardships military members encountered when their service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss Authority between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status.

When RSLSP began on Oct. 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 service members, veterans and beneficiaries were eligible for this benefit. Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, the services have engaged in extensive and persistent outreach efforts over the past 14 months. Outreach efforts including direct mail, engaging military and veteran service organizations, social networks and media outlets, will continue through March 4, 2011.

To apply for more information, or to gather more information on RSLSP, including submission requirements and service-specific links, go to <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

## 'Don't Ask' Repeal Training Set to Begin

By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 14, 2011 - Training will begin shortly for experts in certain specialties and leaders as part of the plan for finalizing repeal of the law that bars gay men, lesbians and bisexuals from serving

openly in the military, the chief of staff for the Defense Department's repeal implementation team said here today.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Steven A. Hummer outlined the process in an interview.

President Barack Obama signed the repeal of the law commonly known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Dec. 22, beginning a process that will culminate in full repeal.

The current policy remains in effect until 60 days after the secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the president certify the military's readiness to implement the repeal.

Gates has said he wants repeal done expeditiously and effectively, and that it can happen this year.

Clifford L. Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, issued a memo Feb. 10 to the military secretaries on the implementation plan. "The memo continues the pre-implementation process," Hummer said. Now, the general added, the team is ensuring all the policies are prepared

so that when repeal day actually occurs they will go into effect.

The implementation team also is ensuring that training is in place for all 2.2 million members of the military.

The Defense Department, along with representatives from all five services, developed and synchronized the training.

"The services will each put their colors and their appropriate culture into those [plans]," he said. "The Navy will talk about petty officers, and the Marines will talk about sergeants."

Training is broken into three tiers. "Tier 1 and Tier 2 training will start in earnest soon," the general said. Tier 1 training is for people who have unique skill sets, such as chaplains, lawyers, personnel specialists, military investigators and recruiters, he explained. Tier 2 training is for leaders, and Tier 3 training is for the force at large.

"This is leader-led training," Hummer said. "Our over-arching theme is leadership, professionalism, discipline and respect."

Leaders at every level will be responsible for training their people, he said. "Professionalism is the expectation across all the services," Hummer said. "This is a disciplined force, and we expect to see that as the training and repeal go into place. Lastly, respect is what everybody expects to receive and what everybody should give."

The training will include some PowerPoint presentations with vignettes to encourage discussions, as well as presentations by the service chiefs that will introduce the topic and provide their intents for the forces.

The services will deliver the first of many progress reports to Stanley on March 1.

## Troops Urged to Quit Smokeless Tobacco

From a Tricare News Release



FALLS CHURCH, Va., Feb. 10, 2011 - When the Defense Department weighs in on kissing and spitting, it's with good reason -- two good reasons, in fact: love and health.

Using smokeless tobacco can pose a stinky, unsavory obstacle to sharing a kiss with a loved one, parent, child or sweetheart. It also may cause a slew of serious health problems. That's why TRICARE wants military personnel to participate in the Great American Spit Out on Feb. 24, and kiss the spit goodbye for a day.

About 19 percent of 18- to 24-year-old men in the armed forces use smokeless tobacco -- that's more than double the national rate. The DOD Quit Tobacco -- Make Ev-

eryone Proud campaign at [www.uanquit2.org](http://www.uanquit2.org) is focusing on helping those who spit and chew tobacco to develop a personalized cessation plan.

"Many of our servicemen started using smokeless tobacco at a young age due to peer pressure and became addicted before realizing the negative effects it could have on their personal relationships and health," said Navy Cmdr. (Dr.) Aileen Buckler, a U.S. Public Health Service officer and chairman of the DOD Alcohol and Tobacco Advisory Committee.

Throughout the month of February the DOD website will host a special Great American Spit Out page, [www.uanquit2.org/facts/gaspo/](http://www.uanquit2.org/facts/gaspo/), where service members can publicly post their pledge to quit.

Also on the website, Navy Capt. (Dr.) Larry Williams, public health emergency officer, will answer questions about smokeless tobacco. Installations planning cessation events will find ideas, an event registration page, pledge cards, and downloadable promotional materials.

Service members and their friends, families and other supporters are invited to join the event on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/uanquit2.org](http://www.facebook.com/uanquit2.org). Those planning to quit can get a "Kiss me, I'm Tobacco Free" badge to post on their Facebook page.

The website will showcase graphic photos of the devastating effects of surgery for oral cancer, which has been linked to smokeless tobacco use. Those who use smokeless tobacco are marked by bulging cheeks, gunk stuck in teeth, permanently discolored teeth, and spitting cups -- all universally unappealing. Visitors will also find hard-hitting facts that dispel the myth that smokeless tobacco is a safe alternative to smoking. For example, almost half of those who contract oral cancer die within five years, and one American dies from oral cancer every hour.

"Don't let spitting and chewing get in the way of your personal relationships," Buckler urged. "Take this opportunity to do something for yourself and those you love. Kiss smokeless tobacco goodbye and experience the benefits to your social life and health."

Enrolling in the website's comprehensive support system, Train2Quit, can be the first step in the journey to saying goodbye to smokeless tobacco. The system features interactive components such as quit tools, self-assessment questionnaires, and quizzes.

Service members can create a customized quit plan with a calendar to track progress and learn how to beat cravings, overcome weight gain and cope with nicotine withdrawal. The site also has personal quit coaches, available 24/7, to get answers to questions about becoming tobacco free.

## Website Links Unemployed Vets, Spouses to Jobs

By Terri Moon Cronk, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 9, 2011 - Unemployed veterans, wounded warriors, reserve-component service members and their spouses searching for jobs can find one-stop shopping at a Web portal designed just for

them.

Operated by the Army Reserve, the military-friendly Employee Partnership of the Armed Forces at <http://www.EmployerPartnership.org> lends assistance not only to those looking for a job, but also to public and private employers who are ready to hire former service members and help to support the troops, said Maj. Gen. Keith L. Thurgood, deputy chief of the Army Reserve.

"It's all about connecting supply and demand," Thurgood said.

Employers are attracted to veterans because they are highly skilled leaders from the finely tuned military atmosphere, the general explained.

"That's the crux of the program," Thurgood said. "It's a mutually beneficial program where the employer gets someone who's drug-free, understands collaboration, [and] can think strategically and act at a tactical level to get the job done."

Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is a longtime advocate of hiring veterans.

"Veterans bring a maturity. They bring leadership. They bring a life experience," he said last year. "They bring a dedication they may not have had when they were 17, 18 or 19 years old, when they were coming out of high school or in the first couple years of college."

Thurgood said the portal, launched on Veterans Day, still is in its infancy, but already has 7,500 registered users.

"We've got over 1,300 [employers with job openings], including 95 Fortune 500 companies," he said.

While many job websites exist on the Internet, Thurgood said, veterans should know [EmployerPartnership.org](http://EmployerPartnership.org) offers a personal touch, such as a resume-building feature that translates military language into civilian terms. Deciphering "military speak" is a common concern for human resources people in the corporate world, the general added.

"We take [a military specialty] and translate it into something an HR professional can understand," he said. "That's a very important piece of what we do."

And it's not just about the military, Thurgood said.

"It's about a national program we need to put in place to share this great resource that we call people, because if you look at the unemployment rate, and the demographic of 18-to-24-year-olds, and then break that down into veterans, it's higher than the national average."

And sometimes, he added, the rate of unemployment among veterans is twice of the rate among civilians.

"We have ability to reach out to you personally to help you get your resume right, help you through the interview process, and make the right connections with employers," the general said. "The personal touch is something we provide that nobody else does."

The portal also has advice for veterans who want to start a business, Thurgood noted, offering training that explains how to become a smarter business person and entrepreneur.

"It's free, it's easy, and it's a great way for us to connect the great skill sets that we bring to corporate America," he said. "In my opinion, our great military does two things well: it delivers results and grows leaders. That's exactly what America needs."

## Center Provides Advice on Post-deployment Intimacy Issues

By Lisa Daniel, American Forces Press Service



BETHESDA, Md., Jan. 27, 2011 - In the list of problems that can confront service members after a combat deployment, few can be harder to talk about or more devastating than the inability to resume intimate relationships.

Couples who have survived multiple combat deployments know the situation all too well.

"The first few years of the war, everybody thought they'd get off the plane and the honeymoon would start," Rebekah Sanderlin, an Army wife at Fort Bragg, N.C., and "Operation Marriage" blogger, told American Forces Press Service. "The first two weeks are good, then it's downhill for several months."

"We had a hard time just feeling like we knew each other," Sanderlin said of her husband, who has deployed several times. "It was like there was a stranger in the house. Even if we were physically intimate, we really didn't feel connected."

The Sanderlins are far from alone. "I haven't met anybody who just bounces right back," she said of redeployed couples.

While it's hard to quantify the problem, it is common enough that psychiatrists

with the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, part of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences here, are reaching out with information to health care providers, counselors and military families to help troops re-establish deep connections — both emotional and physical — upon returning home.

"Intimacy is an important part of post-deployment health care," Dr. Stephen J. Cozza, associate director of the center and professor of psychiatry at the university, told American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel. Any couple separated for many months needs to be patient and give extra attention to their relationship after a deployment, he added.

But for those suffering from the current wars' signature wounds of post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury, "those conditions can have a profound effect on relationships, and especially intimacy," Cozza said.

People with post-traumatic stress sometimes experience personality changes, become emotionally distant or avoid people and feelings, he explained. TBIs can further complicate relationships, and especially sexuality, depending on the injury, which may leave the person in physical pain and cause their partner to double as caregiver, he said.

Add to that possible side effects of medications, impulsive or violent behavior, or substance abuse, and many post-deployment problems can hinder intimacy, Cozza said.

All of this can be devastating to couples and seeking help can be difficult. "How do you bring that subject up?" Cozza asked. "Often, we just don't even have the words to express it."

The center has developed fact sheets and guidance for health care providers and families on issues of reintegration and intimacy. They cite intimacy as an often neglected area of care and urge people to talk about their problems -- and for providers to bring up the issue.

Other guidance for health care providers includes:

- Educate patients and partners about implications of brain injuries, especially in areas that control sexuality, inhibitions and impulses;

- Encourage communication to work through redeployment changes, including self-image; and

- Urge creativity in finding solutions to intimacy challenges.

"It's really important for people to have a sexual relationship that doesn't have to be all about sex," Cozza said.

Sometimes service members return home more intense and aggressive than when they left, and they may have different attitudes about sex, Cozza said. Counselors can help them work through those changes,

he added, and partners should refrain from sex until it's mutually enjoyable.

Many couples can work out their post-deployment intimacy problems within a few months of being back together, and even in the case of serious injuries, intimacy usually returns over time, Cozza said.

The center's tips for improving intimacy include:

- Find ways to be close that do not involve sex, such as showing affection in other ways;
- Spend quality time together;
- Talk about your feelings, hopes and desires when you're both calm and ready to listen;
- Respect your partner's need for space; and
- Schedule intimate time.

Sanderlin and her husband discovered that a little professional counseling can go a long way.

"I recommend counseling for everybody," she said. "TRICARE pays for it, and all you have to do is call Army OneSource." But no matter how many times her husband deploys, Sanderlin said, reintegration always is a challenge.

"It seems to take several months to feel normal again," she said.

## Directory Links Wounded Warriors, Families to Resources

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 3, 2011 - From benefits and compensation to education and training, an online directory is providing wounded warriors, veterans and their families a direct connection to thousands of state, local and national resources.

"There's so much information on the Web right now, it's nice to have one place to access all of the content, the services, the information you need," John R. Campbell, deputy assistant secretary of defense for wounded warrior care and transition policy, told American Forces Press Service. "It really permits the service member and family the ability to get information directly."

The Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs departments created the National Resource Directory -- located at <http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/> -- to link wounded warriors, service members, veterans, their families and caregivers to nationwide resources that support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration, Campbell explained.

Toward that end, the directory contains information on a broad range of topics,

including benefits and compensation, education and training, employment, caregiver support, health, housing, and transportation and travel.

With such a vast amount of information, Campbell said, a considerable effort went into creating user-friendly navigation tools to help people pin down resources quickly, whether it's local grassroots efforts or national-level initiatives. People can search for a resource or program by subject, state or territory. A recent addition is a state widget that people can customize and embed in home pages, blogs and other sites. Once there, the information is updated automatically.

New programs and resources are added to the directory as quickly as agencies and organizations can roll them out. Experts always are working to ensure they're hitting on the hot topics for troops and their families, Campbell noted, and as a result, the site is constantly evolving.

Campbell cited veteran homelessness as an example.

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness is working with the Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development departments to eliminate homelessness entirely by VA's goal of 2015.

The directory has devoted an entire section to homelessness, featuring resources that offer everything from emergency housing to employment assistance.

Spouse employment is another area of growth on the directory, Campbell noted, particularly with new programs and resources in the works. The Labor, Commerce and Defense departments and the Small Business Administration, for example, are working with the business community to expand career options for spouses. Officials will ensure new spouse employment resources are added to the directory as they arise, he said.

While officials always are on the lookout for new information to post to the directory, feedback from troops and their families plays an integral role in keeping the site current, Campbell said. The site includes an easy-to-locate section where people can submit resources for consideration or pass on praise for outstanding service.

"We'll take that resource and, if we find out it's a good one, we'll put it up," he said. Officials verify each resource before posting, he added. A nonprofit organization, for example, must be in good standing with the Better Business Bureau before it can be considered for the directory.

"That's the idea: to make it easy, make it efficient, make it valuable," Campbell said.

To further that effort, he said, a mobile version of the directory will launch in the spring for smart phone users.

"The target audience is younger service members and families," he added. "We're really excited about that."

Campbell said he's received great feedback on the site, and is encouraged by a vast improvement in visitors, which he attributes to word of mouth. In the last quarter of 2010, the site's unique visitors jumped by 115 percent, he said.

"We're continuing to get reinforcement that we're doing the right thing," he said.

## Nonpartisan Group Teaches Vets How to Run for Office

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Jan. 31, 2011 - Ask most Americans what they they'd like to see in their elected officials, and they're likely to rattle off a laundry list of characteristics: integrity, leadership experience, an ability to work cooperatively to tackle tough challenges, and perhaps most of all, a willingness to put what's best for the country above their own self-interest.

These are the same characteristics that make America's men and women in uniform one of the country's most-trusted groups, polls consistently show, and why a nonprofit educational organization is encouraging more military veterans to consider running for public office.

Veterans Campaign teaches veterans how to run for federal, state or local office, Seth Lynn, a Marine Corps Reserve captain who serves as its executive director, said in an interview with American Forces Press Service.

The group has no political or ideological agenda, he emphasized. Its goal simply is to demystify the political campaigning process so the country can benefit from what he called a largely untapped source of "phenomenal leaders."

"Military service is terrific preparation for being an elected leader," Lynn said. It puts people in situations where success demands an ability "to put aside your differences with a group of incredibly diverse people with different backgrounds and opinions and from different parts of the country ... and to do what's best for the country."

And veterans, particularly those who have served in combat, clearly recognize that "the enemy is the guy at the end of the battlefield, not the guy on the other side of the aisle," Lynn said.

The Hatch Act establishes clear lines about what military members can and can't do when it comes to partisan politics. They're encouraged to vote, but are banned from soliciting or receiving political contributions or engaging in political activity while on duty, in a government office or while

wearing a military uniform.

The result is that many veterans don't know what's involved in actually running for office.

"You have this great leadership experience, but at the same time, little campaign knowledge," Lynn said. "That is where Veterans Campaign is trying to bridge the gap, to take this group of people who would make outstanding elected leaders but don't really know much about actually getting there, and giving that extra step they need to become that next generation of outstanding leaders."

Lynn cited the national trend, particularly since the 9/11 terror attacks, of public support for America's military men and women. "There is a huge amount of respect and admiration nearly all Americans have for the young men and women who are going abroad and defending the country," he said.

In many respects, the military is a self-selected group that has proven its willingness "to volunteer and go risk their lives for the United States," Lynn said.

"And that is a terrific group of people you would want to have as leaders," he added. "And we are beginning to see that America recognizes that and wants those type of people to be elected leaders."

Lynn, a 2002 U.S. Naval Academy graduate who has deployed twice to Iraq and once to Okinawa, came up with the concept of Veterans Campaign two years ago at a Princeton University workshop for women considering running for public office.

That fall, Lynn helped to organize the first Veterans Campaign workshop at Princeton, followed by subsequent workshops after the organization became affiliated with George Washington University here.

The next workshop is slated for Feb. 11 and 12 at George Washington University. It will include discussions about how veterans fared during the recent elections, with several Congress members with military service sharing their own experiences, Lynn said. Another presentation will help participants "bulletproof their service record" to identify inaccuracies or inconsistencies that could hurt them at election time, he said.

The second day of training will be a "campaign boot camp" that focuses on nuts and bolts of running for office, such as how to start and finance a campaign and how to deal with the media, he said.

While lamenting the small percentage of Congress members with military experience – the lowest since World War II – Lynn said he sees change in the wind, thanks, in part, to Veterans Campaign.

"We have some incredibly talented young people who are thinking about possibly running someday," he said. "It may take a few more [election] cycles for them to start running, but we hope to see an uptick in that."

Ultimately, Lynn said, having more veterans in elected office will benefit the whole country.

"You really do have people who have a code of ethics that allows them to put the country before themselves," he said. "Everybody on all sides of the political spectrum believes we need more of that in Washington right now."

"At the same time, we have a huge amount of potential for phenomenal elected leaders that we are not tapping into as much as we could," he continued. "And we will have a much better situation in our government when we utilize and tap into this resource of phenomenal leaders."

## Obama Announces 'Unprecedented Commitment' to Military Families

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Jan. 24, 2011 - President Barack Obama today unveiled a governmentwide plan to strengthen military family support, offering a glimpse at a few of the new programs and cooperative efforts being launched in the coming months to improve quality of life and well-being for military families.

"Today, I'm proud to announce that for the first time ever, supporting the well-being of our military families will be a priority not just for the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, but all across the federal government," Obama said.

Speaking from the White House's East Room, Obama unveiled this "unprecedented commitment" to military families with First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, at his side. Top government and Defense Department officials also were on hand, including Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, the service chiefs, and their spouses.

Spotlighting the importance of military family support, Obama recalled his trip to Afghanistan last month, where he spoke to troops and asked them what he could do to better support them.

"Without missing a beat, they looked me in the eye and they gave me their answer," the president said. "It wasn't about more equipment. It wasn't about more resources on the battlefield. In fact, it wasn't about them."

"They said, to a man: 'Sir, take care of our families,'" he said. "If we know our families are all right back home, then we can do our jobs."

Service members and their families have

done everything the nation has asked of them in this decade of war, and the nation now must serve them with the same unfailing support, Obama said. That's exactly why he directed a governmentwide review of military family support, he added, calling for "innovative new partnerships" to better serve military families worldwide.

Earlier today, the White House released the results of this nearly yearlong review of military family support. From child care to health care to spouse employment, the report -- titled "Strengthening our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment" -- identifies the key issues military families face and presents programs and resources government agencies plan to launch in the coming months to address them.

The report outlines four key areas the whole-of-government effort plans to address: enhancing military families' well-being and psychological health, developing military spouse career and education opportunities, increasing child care availability and quality, and ensuring excellence in military children's education and development.

Improving quality of life is a priority, Obama noted, offering a glimpse at some programs that will focus in the coming months on families' well-being. The Defense and Health and Human Services departments, for example, are working together to improve community mental health services and to prevent suicides, he said. And a new office in the Treasury Department will help to protect military families from financial pitfalls, such as predatory lending.

"And we are going to remain relentless -- not just at VA, but at [the Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services departments] and across the government -- in our fight to end homelessness among our veterans," the president said.

"We have to have zero tolerance for homelessness among our veterans," he added, a statement that was met by thunderous applause.

Another priority, Obama said, is the education and development of military children, many of whom attend public schools. He praised the efforts of agencies such as the Education and Interior departments. The Education Department will give military families priority in some of its grant programs, and the Interior Department plans to create more opportunities for military children.

The government also will "redouble" its effort to help military spouses attain education goals and careers, Obama said.

"We're going to help spouses to get that degree, find that job or start that new business," he said. "We want every company in America to know our military spouses and veterans have the skills and the dedication, and our nation is more competitive when we tap their incredible talents."

Finally, the government is going to expand child care options for military parents. "Working together, we believe we can find new child care options for tens of thousands of military children," the president said.

In total, Obama said, his administration is making nearly 50 specific commitments to military families today. But the government can't accomplish this mission alone, he added.

"Government has its responsibilities," Obama said. "One percent of Americans may be fighting our wars, but a hundred percent of Americans need to be supporting our troops and their families -- a hundred percent."

## VA Provides Benefits to Veterans' Caregivers

From a White House News Release



WASHINGTON, Feb. 9, 2011 - The Veterans Affairs Department is launching the first of a series of new and enhanced services supporting family caregivers of seriously ill and injured veterans.

President Barack Obama signed the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 legislation in May, authorizing VA to establish a wide range of new services to support certain caregivers of eligible post-9/11 veterans.

"Caregivers make tremendous sacrifices every day to help veterans of all eras who served this nation," Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. "They are critical partners with VA in the recovery and comfort of ill and injured veterans, and they deserve our continued training, support and gratitude."

In addition to the new benefits and services for eligible veterans who were disabled in the line of duty since Sept. 11, 2001, VA also will begin providing enhanced benefits and services to caregivers of veterans of all eras who already are enrolled in VA care, including:

- Access to VA's toll-free Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274;
- Expanded education and training on caring for Veterans at home;
- Other support services such as counseling and support groups and referral services; and
- An enhanced website for caregivers.

Some of the new benefits of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act are restricted by law to the caregivers of the most seriously ill and injured post-9/11 veterans. Those additional benefits include:

- A monthly stipend;
- Health care coverage;
- Travel expenses, including lodging and per diem, while accompanying veterans undergoing care;
- Respite care; and
- Mental health services and counseling.

VA will report to Congress in the future on the feasibility of expanding the enhanced services to family caregivers of veterans of all eras, officials said.

While some of these enhanced benefits are available now, many of the other significant newly enacted benefits will require the issuance of regulations. These additional benefits include monthly stipends, pay for travel costs, medical coverage, training, counseling and respite care designed to prevent institutionalization of veterans whenever possible.

The law requires detailed regulations for determining eligibility, designating and approving caregivers, and providing stipends and health care coverage to primary family caregivers. The complex process required to implement these regulations will provide veterans, caregivers and the public the opportunity to provide comments before those regulations are finalized.

"VA has supported caregivers of veterans of all eras for almost eight decades," said Deborah Amdur of VA's Care Management and Social Work Service, "and we know from our experience and research that veterans are best served when they can live their lives as independently as possible surrounded by caring family and friends."

Each VA medical center has designated caregiver support coordinators who will assist eligible veterans and caregivers in understanding and applying for the new benefits. VA also has a caregiver support website, <http://www.caregiver.va.gov>, which will provide general information once final regulations are published, officials said.

## 'Virtual World' Helps With Post-traumatic Stress

By Cheryl Pellerin, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Jan. 19, 2011 - The Defense Department is using virtual-world interactivity to educate and help warfighters and others who are reluctant to seek more direct care to deal

with post-traumatic stress, said an official at the National Center for Telehealth and Technology, also known as "T2."

During a recent telephone briefing from the center's headquarters at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Wash., Greg Reger -- a clinical psychologist and acting chief of

the center's innovative technology applications division -- said the kinds of immersive experiences available in virtual worlds, such as the internationally populated virtual world called Second Life, are designed to appeal to tech-savvy service members and their families.

"Far too many of our warriors come home and, despite difficulties they are having, are not going to come and see a psychologist, a social worker, a psychiatrist," Reger said.

According to the center's website, many researchers have declared traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress to be the "signature wounds" of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. About 19 percent of service members returning from combat screen positive for psychological health problems, and just more than half seek help, the website says, noting that barriers for those that don't seek help include perceived stigma, physical access barriers and limited resources.

"There's a lot of great work going on at DOD to address stigma, but it is still an issue," Reger said. "So we desperately need solutions to get resources into the hands of those who will not give us the opportunity to provide them basic care."

Virtual worlds are computer-based simulated environments where users, as representations of themselves called avatars, can interact with each other and build and interact with objects and activities.

"An avatar is basically a computer-generated representation of oneself," Reger said, adding that users create these computer characters to navigate around the environment and to explore and learn.

The T2 Virtual PTSD Experience, based in Second Life, is an immersive, interactive learning activity that is open to the public and educates visitors about combat-related post-traumatic stress.

The graphics-dense immersive simulation requires a broadband Internet connection, he said. Users must download a copy of the Second Life world and then can access the world from any computer with a broadband connection.

When avatars come into the virtual space, Reger said, they land at a welcome center that offers information about different deployment-related difficulties and a map of activities available in the T2 virtual experience.

"The cornerstone of the experience is when they leave that area and go into an area that teaches about the causes of post-traumatic stress disorder," Reger said. "They enter a space where they get into a Humvee and are taken through a computer-generated simulation that includes [intense fighting on an Afghan street and] an explosion.

"As this occurs," he continued, "they receive audio instruction about what we think causes post-traumatic stress disorder,

and this sets the stage for the rest of the experience.”

Users then take a simulated flight home, during which they watch a video about post-traumatic stress. They land at a shopping mall, where each store offers an activity that illustrates a symptom and how it may affect daily life.

For example, Reger said, in the mall is a mattress store.

“If you go into the store, you have an opportunity to lie down on a mattress and a video pops up over the avatar’s head that illustrates a re-experiencing of the traumatic event they experienced earlier during the simulation,” he said. “Then information is presented on the nature of trauma-related nightmares and sleep disturbances.”

The environment uses a range of activities to simulate symptoms and help visitors determine if they or a loved one need care, and offers information about where to go for more direct assistance.

“Second Life provides the opportunity to interact with anyone who is in that space. Any warrior who goes in there will be able to talk with whoever is in that space,” Reger said.

“We know that many of the difficulties that our warriors have result in increased social isolation and diminished interest in getting outside the home and interacting with other people,” he added. “We do wonder about the potential in this space to really get some of these folks connected with each other in a meaningful way that might be helpful.”

The National Center for Telehealth and Technology is a component of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, which leads a collaborative global network to promote the resilience, recovery and reintegration of warriors and their families.

“We created an environment that lets people learn by doing, rather than reading text and watching videos on two-dimensional websites,” Kevin Holloway, the psychologist who led T2’s virtual-world development, said in a statement. “They can learn something new each time they visit.”

## Spouses Can Nominate Boss for Patriot Award

Special to American Forces Press Service



ARLINGTON, Va., Feb. 10, 2011 - Spouses of National Guard and Reserve service members are invited to nominate their employers for the Patriot Award, following a recent expansion in

the program, announced yesterday by the Defense Department’s Employer Support of

the Guard and Reserve agency.

Nominations for the Patriot Award were previously open only to Guard and Reserve service members to nominate their employers.

However, after learning of the growing number of employers with supportive initiatives for military spouses, ESGR added nominations for spouses’ employers, who will receive their own DOD award, the only one of its kind for military spouses.

Employers of military spouses are not legally obligated to provide special support, but Guard and Reserve spouses often share the challenges that go with military service. Child care, managing the household, and work schedules often have to be adjusted when a military spouse deploys.

Military spouses value the cooperation and encouragement of their employers just as much as those in the Guard and Reserve. The expansion of the Patriot Award honors flexible employers and is the only DOD-sanctioned award designated for spouses’ bosses.

The nation has relied heavily on Guard and Reserve service members during overseas military operations over the past decade. Reserve component members have deployed and fought with active-duty troops. Unlike spouses of active duty troops, Guard and Reserve spouses often don’t live near a network of large military bases. In many cases, an employer is a spouse’s strongest support community.

Spouses already have begun submitting nominations. Robyn Gellerup, a Wisconsin mother of three, works as an office manager for a construction company showroom.

“While my husband was deployed both times, [my employers took] care of us like we are part of their family, from mowing our lawn, plowing snow from our driveway, to performing maintenance on our vehicles and home,” Gellerup said. “It gave my husband peace of mind knowing that if something goes wrong I could just pick up the phone and they’d be there.”

All spouses of Guard and Reserve members are eligible to nominate their employers. Nomination forms are accessible on the ESGR website. Each nominated supervisor will receive a Department of Defense Certificate of Appreciation, presented by the spouse’s employee or a volunteer from the ESGR State Committee.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 to develop and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers.

Paramount to ESGR’s mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen

and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.

For more information about ESGR Outreach Programs, or ESGR volunteer opportunities, call 1-800-336-4590 or visit the agency’s website.

## Chandler to Become Next Sergeant Major of the Army



Secretary of the Army John McHugh and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. announced today that Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond F. Chandler III will become the sergeant major of the Army March 1.

“We have the utmost confidence in Command Sgt. Maj. Chandler and look forward to having him join our leadership team,” said McHugh. “He has the right qualities and credentials to assume this vitally important duty that Sgt. Maj. of the Army Preston has skillfully and adeptly performed for the last seven years.”

Chandler is currently the commandant of the U. S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. He will succeed Kenneth Preston, who has served since January 2004.

“Command Sgt. Maj. Chandler is the right soldier to lead our NCO Corps,” Casey said. “He has demonstrated excellence in every position, and has the depth of experiences required to help us lead our Army.”

Chandler will be sworn into the new position March 1 in a ceremony at the Pentagon.

“Being named the 14th sergeant major of the Army is truly an honor,” Chandler said. “I am humbled, yet excited by the opportunity to serve our soldiers and their families in light of the challenges ahead.”

In June 2009, Chandler became the first enlisted commandant of the U. S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

In his new position, Chandler will serve as the Army chief of staff’s personal adviser on matters affecting the enlisted force. The role involves extensive travel and focuses on soldier training, noncommissioned officer development and the well-being of families.

The sergeant major of the Army recommends quality-of-life improvements to Army leadership and often sits on councils that make decisions affecting enlisted soldiers and their families. He also routinely testifies before Congress on these issues.

Preston leaves the position as the longest serving SMA after being selected by previous Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker.

“Many of the great CSMs and SGMs

servicing around the Army today are a product of CSM Chandler's leadership and development efforts," Preston said. "He brings a broad breadth of experience and I have no doubt he will provide the strategic vision and professionalism long associated with this position."

## Gates, Mullen Support Force Reduction Plans

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 16, 2011 - Reductions in end strength for the Army and Marine Corps beginning in 2015 will be conditions-based, and can be tailored if required when

the time comes to implement them, defense leaders told Congress today.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the House Armed Services Committee they support plans to reduce ground forces end strength. The plan factors in the drawdown of all U.S. forces in Iraq by the year's end, and a reduction of forces in Afghanistan, Gates told the panel.

"A big assumption in this is that we have a very much smaller presence in Afghanistan at the end of 2014 than we do now," he said. "And I think you will know as early as the end of 2012 [or] beginning of 2013 whether that is going to happen."

Gates and Mullen said the plan also supports continuing efforts to increase "dwell time" at home stations between deployments.

The Marine Corps leadership fully supports reducing the Corps' end strength when it completes operations in Afghanistan, Gates said. Both Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James F. Amos and his predecessor, retired Gen. James T. Conway, believe the current Marine Corps is "both too large and too heavy to fulfill its traditional missions going forward," the secretary said.

"They are the nation's second land force, which is not what they want to be," Mullen said. "And they have got to get back to some degree, as we move ahead, to their roots -- which is lighter and smaller."

Though it's still unclear exactly how many combat brigades the Army will require, Mullen said, plans generally call for between six and 10.

"The Army has become much more expeditionary, and that is where we are headed," Mullen said. "And I am very comfortable with that."

Mullen said he's also comfortable that end-strength decisions aren't locked in stone. The service chiefs will have ample opportunity to change their recommendations if the

conditions warrant it, he said.

But at a time when the military is seeking efficiencies and the most effective use of every defense dollar, the chairman said, personnel costs have to be addressed. The service chiefs report that when factoring in military, civilian and direct-support contractors, personnel costs represent 60 to 70 percent of their budgets, he noted.

"We are on our way to becoming almost immobilized by just what it costs in terms of our people," he told the committee.

## Army Reserve Chief Cites Reservists' Value

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 2011 - As the Defense Department lays plans to reduce the ground force in response to mounting budget pressures, a senior military officer expressed hope today it won't cut what he called one of the most cost-effective weapons in its arsenal: its reserve components.

Army Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve, said he doesn't yet know if the Army will elect to pare the Army Reserve as it complies with Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates' decision to reduce the Army's permanent active-duty end strength by 27,000 soldiers beginning in 2015.

"I don't have a crystal ball, but my instinct would say it doesn't make sense," Stultz said at a Defense Writers Group breakfast, "because if you reduce the active force, ... you are going to put more dependence on the reserves."

Gates announced force reductions in early January, citing greater-than-anticipated budget pressures and plans to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq by December and to significantly reduce the troop commitment in Afghanistan by the end of 2014. The cuts will include 22,000 troops the Army added in a temporary end-strength increase approved in July 2009.

The Marine Corps also will cut its force by 15,000 to 20,000 Marines.

Stultz said today he hopes to maintain the Army Reserve's current end strength and, if possible, to tap into some of the capabilities the Army will shed as it downsizes.

"If the Army is going to draw down, we need to have a plan to absorb those soldiers into the Army Reserve," he said.

The Army Reserve provides many of the enabling capabilities the active component has come to rely on, particularly in areas such as civil affairs, psychological operations, transportation and engineering. Stultz said he sees no end to demand for these capabilities, even after the current op-

erations in Iraq and Afghanistan conclude. He cited, for example, "pent-up demand" among geographic combatant commanders who would love to tap into Army Reserve capabilities to support more of their theater engagement activities.

The Army -- and the nation -- get tremendous bang for the Army Reserve's \$7.5 billion annual base budget, Stultz told reporters.

"If you look at what our percentage of the budget is compared to the total budget, and then you look at what contribution we are making in terms of the number of soldiers we are providing to the force, that's a pretty good return on investment," he said.

Stultz said the Army force generation model -- which, when fully implemented, will give Army reservists four years at home between one-year deployment cycles -- provides ready forces at a fraction of what it costs to maintain active-duty troops.

"It's a no-brainer, because you are paying them as a full-time soldier for one year, and you are paying them as a part-time soldier for the other four," he said.

Meanwhile, Stultz said, he's committed to identifying areas where the Army Reserve can operate more efficiently so it's able to reinvest more of its funding into training and equipment modernization.

The Army Reserve is better equipped than ever, he said, but still lags behind in equipment modernization. As it acquires newer equipment, Stultz said, he's evaluating strategies that ensure equipment is distributed where it can be used most effectively.

In addition, Army Reserve Command is exploring ways to provide more cost-effective training to Army Reserve soldiers. Among options being explored is more use of simulators and distance-learning programs that deliver standard classroom lecture material reservists can access at their convenience from home.

## Free YMCA.



Many deploying units are not aware that their Soldiers (and their families) can use the local YMCA before, during and after deployment.

According to Jennie Mixon at the Army Services YMCA Resource Center, most YMCAs already take part in the program which allows for 3 months of use prior to mobilization date, the entire mobilization, and then 3 months after demobilization (total of 18 months). ASYMCA pays the fees directly to the local YMCAs. Families can use the YMCA during the deployment, but it must be used at least 8 times per month to remain active. However, these 8 times can include participation

in YMCA team sports. Families also qualify for a limited amount of free Respite Child Care. If your local YMCA does not participate, contact Mixon at [jmixon@asymca.org](mailto:jmixon@asymca.org). She said he is often able to convince them to join the program since there is virtually no cost (only filling out a form requesting reimbursement).

## New Website Promotes Military Info Sharing

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 1, 2011 - Whether they're moving into a new contingency operation or upgrading operations for an existing one, U.S. forces have a new weapon at their disposal when setting up or reconfiguring their command-and-control architectures.

Thanks to the new "C2 Central" website established by U.S. Joint Forces Command, details about command-and-control systems — from their capabilities to their availability to user feedback about how they operate -- are just a few keystrokes away.

Joint Forces Command stood up the new site Oct. 1 to promote information sharing about more than 300 C2 systems, sensors, platforms and the networks on which they operate, Mike Powell, deputy director for advanced systems analysis at the command's Joint Systems Integration Center, told American Forces Press Service.

These systems form the grid of computer equipment and networks the service branches use to communicate with each other, coalition partners and others engaged in warfighting or other contingency operations worldwide, Powell explained.

"They're critical to how the military operates," he said. "This is how information is flowed up and down the chain of command to plan, strategize, execute and control all the different resources involved in the warfighting activity."

Yet until now, users had no central information clearinghouse about what the different C2 systems do, what they don't do, who's responsible for acquiring and maintaining them over the long term and whether they're in the existing inventory to support a requirement. C2 Central does this and more, providing a whole new set of research capabilities over the basic "C2Pedia" database it replaced, Powell said.

"This isn't just a name change. It's a night and day difference," he said. "In fact, the two systems are not common in any way."

Unlike other systems that require special passwords and administrative permission to access, C2 Central requires nothing more

than a government-issued common access card. Only a tiny percentage of its content is restricted to the classified network, Powell said.

And if a particular C2 system isn't immediately available, users can identify other systems that provide similar capabilities. The database also identifies the service component that manages the alternative system and provides points of contact to get more information or requisition one.

That has the potential to save critical research time for those working with limited resources to set up new contingency operations quickly, Powell said.

"If you were to go out and try to find this information, it could take you literally weeks in some cases," he said. "So what we have done is eliminated that time delay on the end users by making this all available and searchable from one central location by an aggregation of all these different databases and sources of information."

C2 Central also provides a library containing thousands of documents about C2 systems, C2 news articles, and announcements about C2 events, training opportunities and conferences.

A C2 Central feature added last month allows authorized users to interface with each other -- getting their questions answered, sharing know-how about the system, and in some cases, identifying shortcomings or redundancies.

"This is a truly valuable resource for anyone involved in the C2 community," Powell said. People can comment about systems information provided, chat in forums about their C2 challenges and swap experiences or lessons learned using the systems.

As word gets out about the new forum, more people are registering each day to participate in the discussions, Powell said.

While C2 Central provides a valuable resource for hands-on operators who use C2 systems in forward-deployed locations, Powell said, it also serves two other important stakeholder groups. It's a tool for program managers and the people who design and develop those systems, as well as for administrators who determine C2 requirements and overseeing the budgeting process.

Powell said providing a central forum creates a huge advantage for these three stakeholder groups to share information, expertise and hands-on experience.

"The biggest advantage to the warfighters is that it helps bridge that information gap between the people in the field trying to operate the C2 systems with the people that acquire the system or understand issues associated with the technical aspects of the system and plugging it all together," he said.

It also gives forward-deployed troops the ability to reach back to the appropriate points of contact to get information they need, Powell noted. "We have done a very

thorough job of 'connecting the dots' in that respect, with points of contacts in all the different areas," he said.

Meanwhile, C2 Central provides valuable insight for the people responsible for developing, resourcing and acquiring these systems.

"It's a decision aid to system portfolio managers," Powell said. "It allows them to go in and look at these capabilities and redundancy gaps and make some important decisions about whether they should keep certain pieces of equipment or consolidate them, or build a new piece that does the functions of three combined and save taxpayer money in the long run."

Ultimately, Powell said, that makes the whole C2 effort more efficient and responsive to warfighter needs.

"The closer we get to actually identifying systems capabilities against particular mission needs and matching them up against the mission thread, ... then the better, more efficient use of the C2 system will occur," he said.

## Tricare Young Adult Program Announced



The Department of Defense announced today its introduction of the premium-based Tricare Young Adult Program (TYAP) which extends medical coverage to eligible military family members to the age of 26.

Expected to be in place later this spring, TYAP implements the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of fiscal 2011. Premium costs for TYAP are not yet finalized, but the NDAA specifies rates must cover the full cost of the program.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 required civilian health plans to offer coverage to adult children until age 26. Tricare previously met or exceeded key tenets of national health reform, including restrictions on annual limits, lifetime maximums, "high user" cancellations, or denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions -- but did not include this expanded coverage for adult children. Dependent eligibility for Tricare previously ended at age 21 or age 23 for full-time college students.

The fiscal 2011 NDAA now gives the DoD the authority to offer similar benefits to young adults under Tricare.

"We've been working hard to make sure we could put Tricare Young Adult on a fast track," said Tricare Deputy Director, Rear Adm. Christine Hunter. "Fortunately for our beneficiaries concerned about health care coverage for their adult children, the law signed by the President includes opportunities for military families to elect this new

premium-based plan retroactive to Jan. 1.”

Beginning later this spring, qualified, unmarried dependents up to age 26 will be able to purchase Tricare coverage on a month-to-month basis – as long as they are not eligible for their own employer-sponsored health coverage.

“This program has the potential to extend Tricare coverage to several hundred thousand additional beneficiaries,” said Hunter. “The premium allows us to provide this excellent benefit to our military families while responsibly addressing the impact of health care costs on the DoD budget.”

Initially, the benefit offered will be a premium-based Tricare standard benefit. Eligible family members who receive health care between now and the date the program is fully implemented may want to purchase TYAP retroactively and should save their receipts. Premiums will have to be paid back to Jan. 1, 2011, in order to obtain reimbursement.

Adults who are no longer eligible for Tricare, but need health insurance coverage, may wish to explore the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP). CHCBP is a premium-based program offering temporary transitional health coverage for 18-36 months. Coverage must be purchased within 60 days of loss of Tricare eligibility.

For more information on TYAP and CHCBP visit <http://www.Tricare.mil/>.

## Family Advocacy Launches Safe Sleep Campaign

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Jan. 21, 2011 - It was eight years ago, but I vividly recall the mix of joy and terror I felt after my daughter was born.

An Internet information junkie, I had researched everything from swaddling to feeding to putting my baby to sleep. But, as I'm sure other Web addicts can attest, I soon discovered a host of conflicting and sometimes confusing information.

Sleep was a particularly vexing topic. Should I put her to bed on her back or belly? Can I give her a pillow or blanket? Is it OK to co-sleep? My questions went on and on.

In the Air Force at the time, I was relieved to turn to trusted base resources for clarification and advice, particularly when it involved sleep, for both my baby and myself. And the resources for new and expectant parents are even more abundant and accessible today.

Most recently, the Defense Department's Family Advocacy Program launched a "Putting Baby Safely to Sleep" campaign

to ensure parents have the most current, life-saving information.

The campaign's cornerstone is a blog for new and expectant parents called "Sleep Like a Baby: The Keys to Infant Slumber." In the coming months, the blog will include information and links to resources from a variety of subject-matter experts.

Topics will include preparing a nursery, caring for a baby while on the move, managing parental sleep deprivation and fatigue during a deployment cycle, health concerns related to sleep, talking to caregivers and extended family about safe sleep practices and more.

"It is in those first sleep-deprived weeks and months that new parents need good solid information and support in creating safe sleep environments and practices to ensure that everyone gets off to a good start," wrote Mary Campise, a licensed clinical social worker with the family advocacy program, in the first blog post: "Military Parents: This Blog's for You." Add in frequent relocations, deployment cycles and parenting solo due to military operations, and you can see how military moms and dads could use some unique support."

I encourage our new and expectant moms and dads to follow this blog and stay tuned for information regarding this important campaign. I know I will. Three kids later, and I still have questions!

To comment on this blog, or to read other posts, visit the Family Matters website.

## Army Reserve 2020 Vision and Strategy



As our nation contends with an uncertain security environment, persistent conflict, and challenging fiscal realities, the need for a wide range of flexible and responsive military capabilities is paramount. The coming

decade requires our continued engagement around the globe, as an operational force in support of our National Security Strategy.

The Army Reserve 2020 Vision and Strategy document confirms who we are, what we believe, what we do, and where we are going. It establishes the foundations for our operational concepts and strategies required for us to remain an enduring operational force.

This document details the vision for the Army Reserve as an operational force and serves as a broad blueprint for achieving it. The Army Reserve must be an enduring operational force with refined institutional processes, adaptive leadership, and a commitment to meeting the sustained demand for deployments, contingencies, and steady-state security cooperation missions.

We must be prepared organizationally, doctrinally, technically, and intellectually.

**You can find the Army Reserve 2020 Vision and Strategy statement and companion slide briefing by clicking here: <http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/news-andmedia/wordfromthetop/Pages/ArmyReserveVisionandStrategy2020.aspx>**

## Agencies Join Together to Support Military Families

By Robert L. Gordon III, Military Community and Family Policy



WASHINGTON, Jan. 24, 2011 - Robert L. Gordon III is the deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy. In this Family Matters guest blog, Mr. Gordon

shares details of the partnership federal agencies are forming as part of an unprecedented government effort to provide better military family support.

President Barack Obama today announced the findings of a study which identifies an enduring, government-wide approach to enhance the resilience of military families and to help them better navigate the unique aspects of military life by:

- Enhancing the well-being and psychological health of the military family
- Ensuring excellence in military children's education and their development
- Developing career and educational opportunities for military spouses
- Increasing child care availability and quality for the Armed Forces

President Obama commissioned the study last spring, led by the National Security Staff with participation by every cabinet agency, to identify and address the most pressing family issues. Presidential Study Directive-9 (PSD-9) is the culmination of the effort.

PSD-9 outlines agency commitments to create an integrated, sustainable government support structure for military families that is coordinated with and enhanced by efforts of non-profit organizations, commercial industry, and the general public in our communities. This commitment extends to all who serve – more than 2.2 million Americans serving on active duty, including the National Guard and Reserve members who are geographically dispersed.

Our nation now nears its 10th year of combat. Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than two million troops have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Fifty-five percent of the force is married and 40 percent have two children. Only 37 percent of our families live on military installations; the remaining 63 percent live in thousands of communities

nationwide.

The Defense Department and the military services have a wide variety of programs, policies and systems to promote good physical, emotional, spiritual, educational and social health. This landmark initiative recognizes that the Defense Department cannot identify and address the most pressing issues alone and provides for an interagency approach to ensure the best possible support for our military families.

We are heartened by our continued partnership with government agencies that also embrace and fortify our military families and, in turn, our service members. We applaud their efforts and are confident that this relationship will continue to strengthen service members, their families and the nation as a whole.

We commend and truly appreciate the great efforts made by both the private sector and non-profit organizations who have dedicated themselves to supporting and advocating for our military families. The American community is eager to support those in uniform and their families and these organizations act as an essential conduit.

In turn, our military families and service members are valuable assets in communities around the nation.

Finally, we recognize the strength of support from within the military community itself. From official military programs to the multitude of support groups, readiness groups and volunteer efforts of all those connected to the military, ours is a community for whom service is a way of life.

It is vital for American communities to better understand the challenges our service and families members face – and how their communities can positively and productively involve those families. We are in this together, for it is not merely the work of the military or the government but the nation. Our commitment to strengthen and empower our military families is an enduring effort and one that will be carried out with continued transparency. We will be inviting your feedback as we regularly check our progress. When we invest in the well-being of our military families, we invest in the well-being of our nation.

To comment on this blog, or read other posts, please visit the Family Matters website.

## Employer Partnership Launches Powerful Job Search Tool

By Lt. Col. Matt Leonard, Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces

The Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces launched its new web portal on November 12. This new portal offers Army Reserve Soldiers, their Family members, Wounded Warriors, and veterans increased capabilities when seeking employment opportunities. The portal vastly improves Employer Partner's access to talent as well.

No longer does a job seeker have to re-enter basic personal information every time a search is launched. Instead, the user simply logs in and the system can continue any previous activity. A user may now set-up a personal profile so that he or she is able to save searches, search parameters and individual job announcements within their own "dashboard". By activating the alert option, seekers will be provided with a notification whenever a desired position is posted.

The portal offers other useful features as well. The Resume Builder allows users to create and keep their resume available within the system. Soldiers have an additional feature available to them: access to the Program Support Manager network for career counseling and resume assistance. The new portal's functionality improvements make the search and application process much more efficient, saving Soldiers and other job seekers time.

But the improvements don't stop there. Employers will find the new portal more useful as well. They are now able to enter position vacancies directly into the system and track those jobs, applications and views through their company dashboard. Employers may also reach in to the system and locate the resumes of qualified candidates who may not have had the chance to apply themselves. So just by posting your resume you may be contacted by an employer who needs your skills.

If you had previously used the old job search tool, you should definitely check out the new portal. Although the web link, [www.EmployerPartnership.org](http://www.EmployerPartnership.org) is the same, you are now in the driver's seat and this definitely is not your father's Oldsmobile.

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](http://www.militaryonesource.com) | 1.800.342.9647  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK (8255)

**Social Media and the Army Reserve?**

That's right, we're out there and we want you to be a part of the conversation! Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr connect people with each other and give them access to key resources and information that traditional sources can't.

Thousands have already helped us create the "MyArmyReserve" on-line community of Soldiers, families and followers who share stories, photos, video and information about the Army Reserve with each other, as well as gain answers to their questions directly from the source.

So, whether you're sharing some great video and photos, learning more about a key program or resource, or just expressing your point of view, MyArmyReserve allows your voice to be heard loud and clear! Go to facebook.com, twitter.com and flickr.com, search for and follow MyArmyReserve to be a part of the conversation. Your voice matters and it's your site, too!

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

Public Affairs Products are available at [www.youtube.com/user/ARMEDCOM](http://www.youtube.com/user/ARMEDCOM) or [www.Flickr.com/photos/armedcom](http://www.Flickr.com/photos/armedcom) or [www.dvidshub.net/units/AR-MEDCOM](http://www.dvidshub.net/units/AR-MEDCOM)

You can also follow us at [http://twitter.com/AR\\_MEDCOM](http://twitter.com/AR_MEDCOM) or visit our website at <http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/armedcom>



**2011 Strong Bonds Marriage & Singles events**



**ATTENTION CITIZEN SOLDIERS!**

**Living or assigned to a unit in the 81st Regional Support Command AOR**

(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee) The following dates are for both Married and Single Citizen Soldiers except for 4-6 FEB (Married Only) and 15-17 JUL (Families Only).

<b>28-30</b>	<b>JAN</b>	<b>NEW ORLEANS, LA</b>	<b>29-1</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>ORLANDO, FL</b>
<b>4-6</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>HILTON HEAD, SC</b>	<b>13-15</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>SAVANNAH, GA</b>
<b>25-27</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>ORLANDO, FL</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>NEW ORLEANS, LA</b>
<b>4-6</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>SAVANNAH, GA</b>	<b>15-17</b>	<b>JUL</b>	<b>ORLANDO, FL</b>
<b>25-27</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>ORLANDO, FL</b>	<b>29-31</b>	<b>JUL</b>	<b>ORLANDO, FL</b>
<b>1-3</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>ORLANDO, FL</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>AUG</b>	<b>SAVANNAH, GA</b>

Questions? Contact SSG Jeremy Glasco at [RSC081\\_STRONGBONDS@usar.army.mil](mailto:RSC081_STRONGBONDS@usar.army.mil) or call 803-751-3230.

Visit <http://www.strongbonds.org> for more information.  
*and events nationwide!*

04 OCT 10