

THE NCO JOURNAL

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A QUARTERLY FORUM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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ABOUT IRAQI CULTURE?

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Army Excellence

2005 NCO AND SOLDIER OF THE YEAR

THE NCO JOURNAL



Soldiers in a Humvee search for people wishing to be rescued from Hurricane Katrina floodwaters in downtown New Orleans. Photo courtesy of www.army.mil.
by Staff Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey

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Staff Sgt. Krishna M. Gamble



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Dave Crozier



NCO AND SOLDIER OF THE YEAR

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Sgt. Maj. Lisa Hunter



ON THE COVER:

Spc. Eric Przybylski, U.S. Army Pacific Command Soldier of the Year, evaluates a casualty while he himself is evaluated during the 2005 NCO and Soldier of the Year competition held at Fort Lee, Va.



PHOTO BY: Dave Crozier

TRAINING

NCO NET

It's not a hammer, but it can fit perfectly in a leader's toolbox. We take a look at NCO Net and the many ways it can help you to lead, care, train, and mentor your Soldiers.

Staff Sgt. Krishna M. Gamble



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Is Detroit a terrorist haven? Is Bart Simpson a PsyOps operative? What's the most respectful way to address Soldiers. Check out the "Letters" and see what our readers have to say.

Sgt. Maj. Lisa Hunter



HIGHER LEARNING

To continue their college educations, many Soldiers are going to the internet instead of visiting a classroom.

Staff Sgt. Krishna M. Gamble



HONOR ROLL

In every issue we list the names of the men and women who have given their lives in current operations around the world in order to pay tribute to their sacrifices.

Dave Crozier



Soldiers in a Humvee escort a supply convoy destined for Air Force personnel at Ali Base, Iraq. Photo courtesy of www.army.mil. by Master Sgt. Maurice Hessel.

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From the SMA

Preston touts Soldiers' efforts in Army's recruiting mission

In this edition of the *NCO Journal*, I want to talk to you about some changes in policy that are ongoing and upcoming. These changes represent some significant transitions from how we have done things in the past. All of these changes and improvements are designed to increase public knowledge and awareness of who we are as Soldiers and showcase our Army as the great organization it is today.

Some units have already taken ownership of their local recruiting efforts in and around their posts, camps, and stations. Third Corps and Fort Hood are currently working the Phantom Warrior Referral Program challenge. The command is assisting local recruiters in their mission of recruiting our volunteer force. This program rewards Soldiers for their assistance to local recruiters, like Staff Sgt. Cynthia Hodge of the Copperas Cove Recruiting Station.

In her office, they are calling the program the Soldier Recruiter Assistance Program (SRAP). Similar to the Hometown Recruiter Assistance Program where Soldiers coming out of AIT return home for two weeks to assist local recruiters, the SRAP allows Soldiers in III Corps who are combat veterans to impact our recruiting mission.

Young Soldiers like Pfc. Joel Gonzalez are examples. Pfc. Gonzalez hails from Killeen, Texas, located just outside of Fort Hood. Pfc. Gonzalez knows the local schools and is still well known by the youth at his high school. He and Spc. Jamie Green accompanied Staff Sgt. Hodge, a local recruiter, to visit a potential recruit and his family. Staff Sgt. Hodge said by the time the night was over, the young Soldiers, the potential recruit and that recruit's family had bonded. Shortly after that visit, the recruit shipped off to basic training.

This is the kind of out-of-the-box thinking we need in and around every installation, Reserve Center and National Guard



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Carmen L. Burgess

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston cracks a smile after a Camp Hovey Soldier exuberantly sounds off with the Soldier's Creed.

Armory. We are all recruiters. I challenge you to find innovative ways to help your local recruiting stations, especially in places where there might not be a large concentration of young combat veterans serving as recruiters.

In the spirit of us all being recruiters, I also want to alert you to an upcoming ALARCT message which will positively impact on our recruiting base. Many Americans only see Soldiers in uniform while serving in combat locations and some senior leaders on the television.

The upcoming message will announce the change to our current AR 670-1 regulation, Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia. This message will authorize Soldiers to wear the new Army Combat Uniform (ACU), Battle Dress Uniform (BDU), or the Desert Battle Dress Uniform (DBDU) during commercial travel. The message will detail the specific requirements, situations and conditions for wear.

In a recent poll, military servicemembers are the most trusted profession among the American people. However, many Americans do not know the Soldiers living and working in their neighborhoods and how they contribute to their communities.

Soldiers like Staff Sgt. Deanna Czarnecki, an AGR administrative NCO working out of the 88th Regional Readiness Command, travels from her home in Minneapolis to the Command Headquarters at Fort Snelling, Minn., daily. She volunteers at her church and at the local PTA, yet very few folks in her community know they have a hero in their midst. Others are Soldiers like Staff Sgt. Charlot Fecker, a master fitness trainer and member of the esteemed Golden Knights. He travels the world showcasing the U.S. Army. Staff Sgt. Fecker is an avid bodybuilder and a great example of a Soldier. He is very passionate and proud of being a Soldier. Now, Staff Sgt. Fecker will have the opportunity to showcase who he is when he travels in uniform.

These are but two of the thousands of Soldiers that live in hometowns across America or travel by commercial and military aircraft daily. They are counted as hometown heroes and role models for their communities. We have had huge successes in inspiring the American public with Soldiers returning from OEF/OIF for leave. This policy will expand the recognition of our Soldiers as they travel in uniform.

I need your help getting the word to the lowest levels of leadership to take ownership of this great



Photo by Spc. Joseph Edmondson

When Soldiers interact with the community during events such as Army Career Days the Army story is told on a more personal level. Above, an MP shows a young potential recruit an M-4.

opportunity. Tell your Soldiers to be proud, tell the Army story and serve as the great ambassadors they are today. For more than 230 years our Soldiers have served as role models of the Army Values and Warrior Ethos.

All of you have done a magnificent job in retaining our all-volunteer force. All of the Army senior leadership and I are proud of what you accomplish everyday.

Hooah!!

*Kenneth O. Preston
13th Sergeant Major of the Army*



Photo by Spc. Joseph Edmondson

At a recent Army Career Day held at Fort Bliss, Texas, Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery gave visitors an up-close look at the Patriot Missile System.

"[The] Warrior Ethos has been the common thread that ties us as Soldiers together for the last 229 years. From Valley Forge, to the battlefields of Gettysburg, to the Argonne Forest, to the shores of Normandy, to the mountains of Afghanistan, the streets of Baghdad—that Warrior Ethos is the fiber of which we as Soldiers live by, and an eduring value for all of us that wear the uniform."

SMA Kenneth O. Preston



IED conference spotlights 'mine dogs'

By Phil Manson
Army News Service

One of the more promising developments discussed at the Warfighter IED Conference, Aug. 16-17, was the use of mine dogs to defeat improvised explosive devices.

Jim Pettite, mine dog program manager for the 67th Engineer Detachment, explained how the program works to about 100 conference attendees at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

"The mine dog program involves four months of rigorous training by both the Soldier and the dog," Pettite said. "We use 'family friendly' dog breeds – black labs and golden retrievers - because they are less threatening to civilians than German shepherds and Doberman pinschers.

"The dogs work what is known as 'off leash,' which means they are actually on a leash, but it is several yards long so the dog is safely out in front of its handler." The dogs are trained to detect many different types of explosives and ammunition, and Pettite said, to the dogs, it's all a big game.

"From the very beginning, the dogs are trained to believe that finding IEDs is a big game," said Staff Sgt. Harry Francorabassa, a mine-dog handler with the 67th Engineer Detachment.

"We can train three dogs simultaneously in a 50- by 50-meter area. When they detect an IED successfully, they get to play with their special toy that is introduced to them at the beginning of training," Francorabassa explained. "Find the bomb, play with your toy! It's all a big game for the dogs." However, in theater it's a deadly serious business for the dogs and their Soldiers.

"It's a very hot environment for the dogs," Pettite said. "During a typical workday, the dogs are given frequent breaks, eat a special diet, rest and sleep in air-conditioned kennels. Also, the dog teams rotate out of theater every eight months to keep them fresh mentally and physically. They return to Fort Leonard Wood to repeat the training process for their next deployment.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau

Sgt. Grady Bentley, 58th MP Co. dog handler, instructs Britt to search a cement truck for explosives prior to the truck entering Bagram Air Base. The K-9s serve as an addition to the force protection efforts conducted daily by MPs. They are also trained to participate in combat patrols.

By the end of August, there will be dozens of fully trained dog teams. And as a testament to their effectiveness, not a single dog or handler has become a casualty. Many of the insurgents have placed bounties on the dogs and their handlers.

In the conference's closing remarks, First Army Commander Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré stressed how much of a difference junior leaders can make in defeating the IED threat.

"Never before have the actions of our junior leaders on the battlefield had such a dramatic effect on the strategic outcome of the battle," Honoré said.

"Everyone is a sensor in the IED fight to detect, deter, defeat, prevent and respond to the threat!" Honoré said.

Gaines named as first Senior Enlisted Advisor to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Gen. Peter Pace has selected Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Gaines to serve as the senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs beginning Oct 1.

This is a newly created position established to advise the Chairman on all matters involving enlisted personnel in a joint environment.

Gaines has more than 30 years of active-duty experience including an extensive background in joint operations. He has served in his current billet as the command sergeant major for III Corps and Fort Hood, Texas, since May 9, 2003.



Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Gaines

Fort Dix NCO Academy needs Soldiers



Active Guard and Reserve small group leader/instructor opportunities are available at the Fort Dix NCO Academy, N.J.

Visit <https://arrtc.mcco.y.army.mil/ako/dixncoa/index.asp> for more information or call (609) 562-3505 to speak with the Director of Instruction. Help grow future leaders today.

Army Reserve offers direct commissioning

By Sgt. Patricia Deal
84th USARRTC Public Affairs Office

Facing a significant company grade and warrant officer shortage over the next five years, the Army Reserve has developed an aggressive get-well strategy to fill the anticipated 6,000 company grade and warrant officer vacancies traditional commission sources cannot fill.

Having identified a potential market of more than 2,000 non-PLDC college graduates in the junior enlisted ranks and another 3,500 degreed noncommissioned officers with a minimum of PLDC, the Army Reserve is offering training, career rewards and incentives to encourage candidates to become commissioned officers.

Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, Chief of the Army Reserve, made a staunch appeal to NCOs, urging them to “accept the challenge and lead from the front.”

Helmly gave the 84th U.S. Army Reserve Readiness Training Command’s (84th USARRTC) newly formed Reserve Officer Training Brigade (ROTB) the responsibility to implement a comprehensive officer training and production plan, designed to fill all Army Reserve company grade and warrant officer vacancies by FY10.

The ROTB’s Officer Direct Commissioning (ODC) program offers a process to ensure that 100 percent of direct appointees receive pre-commissioning training so they successfully make the transition from NCO to officer.

A huge attraction of the ODC program is a newly approved \$6,000 accessions and affiliation bonus for joining the following branches: Ordnance, Chemical, Quartermaster, Transportation, and Engineer.

Direct commissioning is a means that gives the Army the flexibility to obtain officers with specific skills when needed — such

as medical and legal professionals.

To be eligible for the ODC program, candidates must be between the ages of 23 and 39; have a college degree (or be within 12 credit hours of earning a bachelors degree); be a PLDC graduate or higher; able to pass the APFT with a minimum score of 210 (70 points in each event); and have no height/weight issues and no permanent profiles.

Additional requirements include: Candidates must not be enrolled in ROTC, OCS or have been disenrolled from a commissioning source; must have a GT score of 110 or higher; hold a secret security clearance or have the ability to obtain a secret security clearance.

In order to receive a direct commission, candidates need to locate an officer unit vacancy and have the commander sign a memo accepting the Soldier for that position. Officials suggested that Soldiers contact their S-1/G-1 to find a position within their brigade, division or Ready Reserve Center.

After graduating from the ODC course, candidates are commissioned second lieutenants and attend the new six-week Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) II prior to attending BOLC III, depending on their branch.

For more information on the Officer Direct Commissioning Program, log on to the ROTB Web site at <https://arrtc.mccoy.army.mil/rotb>, or call the ROTB Information Line at (608) 388-7767.

The application packet for a direct commission is located on the HRC WEB site at: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/opdistappts/images/apptmtbook.pdf>. In addition to submitting a packet, each Soldier will have to sign up for the Officer Development Course on ATRRS.

Information on the \$6,000 lump sum bonus is located on the ROTB Web site at <https://arrtc.mccoy.army.mil/rotb>.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Klandrud, 84th USARRTC ROTB

Officer candidates participate in pugil training as part of the ROTB Officer Direct Commissioning program.

How to get the NCO Journal

Individual subscriptions to the *NCO Journal* are available through the Government Printing Office at the annual cost of \$16 for domestic and Army Post Office (APO) addresses or \$22.40 for delivery to foreign addresses. The subscription price covers four issues annually. The subscription program is open to all individuals and non-government organizations. Individual copies are available for \$5 domestic or \$7 foreign.

To order online, visit the GPO Bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> and type in “NCO Journal” at the

search field. After the search completes, click on the shopping cart next to the title and follow the instructions provided.

The GPO also accepts orders by calling toll-free at 1-866-512-1800.

Any unit with a publications account can update their 12 series to request the *NCO Journal* using the same procedure they use to request all other publications. They can update their 12 series at the <http://www.usapa.army.mil> Web site. The IDN for the *NCO Journal* is 050041.



Asymmetric Warfare Group seeks warfighters

The Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG) is the Army's new rapid deployable unit organized to conduct continuous and simultaneous operations throughout the world to defeat specified asymmetric threats against our nation.

The centerpiece of the AWG is its field teams. Staffed by seasoned warfighters and functional experts, these field teams are the center of excellence for innovative thinking and the development of new tactics and countermeasures.

The AWG is seeking senior NCOs (sergeant first class through sergeant major) and officers (major and lieutenant colonel) with unique skills who possess the following traits:

- Operational/combat experience.
- Bearing/physical prowess.
- Capable of independent/small team operations.
- Ability to assess complex situations and develop innovative solutions.
- Excellent communications skills.

A rigorous one-week assessment course is used to identify those applicants with the right skills, experience and aptitude needed to conduct the AWG's mission.

The administrative phase consists of the AWG Combat PFT and a series of psychological tests and evaluations. All field team applicants (regardless of age and rank) are required to take the AWG combat PFT, which consists of three events done in BDUs, boots, body armor with front and back plate and helmet. The events are: 4-mile run, 6 ft. wall climb and carry 165 lb. dummy for 50 meters. You should negotiate this PFT as rapidly as you are able. There is no re-test.

The evaluation phase is both mentally and physically challenging to you. The specifics are left vague for many reasons, but applicants should prepare to walk up to 10 miles per day carrying a 35 lb. backpack in addition to their rations and water.

The field team assessment culminates with a commander's board. The commander's board interviews each applicant and decides who is assigned to the AWG.



Once assigned to the AWG, field team applicants attend a comprehensive 20-week field team training course. This extensive training focuses on basic and advanced rifle/pistol marksmanship, demolition & IED training, communications, surveillance, evasive driving and other specialized training vital to the AWG's mission.

There are numerous combat support (Level 2) and combat service support (Level 1) positions available to active-duty NCO's (sergeants through master sergeants.) and officers (captain through major). Personnel for these positions are also carefully screened and selected through a three day testing and interview process consisting of an APFT, psychological evaluation and the commander's board. A Level 1 and Level 2 assessment/selection is held every month at Fort Meade, Md.

To request an online application and to determine your eligibility, contact the AWG recruiting team at awg.recruiter@us.army.mil or toll free at 1-877-AWG-8120/8121/8123.

On the Web – Free stuff for troops

For Deployed Soldiers

<https://www.operationuplink.org/> - Free phonecards.
<http://www.appreciateourtroops.org/fourtroops.shtml> - To have commander sign up for mugs for his or her unit.
<http://www.booksforsoldiers.com/forum/index.php> - free books, DVD's, CD's.
<http://prayercentral.net/engage/militaryprayer/daily.php> - daily prayer and scriptures.
<http://operationmilitarypride.org/smsignup.html> - free care packages.
http://www.soldiersangels.org/heroes/submit_a_soldier.php - get adopted to receive stuff

<http://www.operationshoobox.com/> - free shoebox care package.
<http://www.treatthetroops.org/> - free cookies.
<http://bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html> - lowest airfare available.
<http://bluestarmoms.org/care.html> - free care packages.
<http://66.241.249.83/> - free air conditioners/heaters.receive stuff.

For Family Members

<http://www.operationhomelink.org/> - Free computers for spouses or parents of deployed Soldiers in ranks private through sergeant.

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2004/2/prweb106818.htm> - free mail/gifts sent to children of deployed soldiers.
<http://anysoldier.com/ForSoldiersOnly.cfm> - To sign up for sponsoring soldier care packages for theater.
<http://www.heromiles.org/> - free air travel for emergency leave, and for the family members of injured Soldiers to travel to medical facility.
<http://www.militarymoms.net/sot.html> - free care packages (your family member signs up to have sent to you).
http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11232004_2004112312.html - free shipping/packing materials.

Soldiers who bought gear can claim expense

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

Some servicemembers who bought their own protective gear will get reimbursed for the purchase under a new policy approved Oct. 4.

David S. C. Chu, the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, approved the directive that allows military personnel to be reimbursed "for privately purchased protective, safety or health equipment."

The order covers the period between Sept. 10, 2001 and Aug. 1, 2004. Pentagon officials said "relatively few" service members are affected by the order.

In the early days of the Global War on Terrorism, there was a shortage of Interceptor armor. The services issued body armor to those most in need of it. However, some servicemembers - both active and Reserve component - bought their own protection.

Legislation passed by Congress earlier this year authorized the services to reimburse servicemembers for the expenditures. The legislation applies to a specified set of personal protection equipment and can be claimed "by either the member or by another person on behalf of the member for the member's

personal use in anticipation of, or during, the member's deployment for operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom."

Reimbursement is limited to the actual purchase price - plus shipping - of the equipment and servicemembers must have the receipts. Under the legislation, those claiming reimbursement must turn in their privately purchased gear. The services will destroy the equipment, as it may not meet government standards. Under the policy, reimbursement cannot exceed \$1,100 for any one piece of equipment.

The services can request to add items to the list. The list includes: the complete outer tactical vest or equivalent commercial ballistic vests. The components of the vest - groin protector, throat protector, yoke and collar assembly, collar protector, ballistics inserts and small-arms protective inserts - are covered individually. The list also includes the Kevlar helmet, ballistic eye protection and hydration systems.



The Interceptor Body Armor was in short supply during the beginnings of the Global War on Terrorism.

New extended care health option available

TRICARE's Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) became available for beneficiaries of active-duty family members (ADFMs) with defined qualifying conditions on Sept. 1. Beneficiaries who currently receive care through the Program for Persons with Disabilities (PFPWD) and do not qualify for ECHO will continue receipt of care through TRICARE program options—Prime, Extra or Standard.

This new program delivers financial assistance and additional benefits, including supplies and services, beyond those available within TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra. The ECHO benefit also increases the monthly government cost share from \$1,000 (through PFPWD) to \$2,500 per eligible family member. Additionally, beneficiaries who are homebound may qualify for extended in-home health care through ECHO.

Active-duty family members who have one of the following conditions may qualify for ECHO benefits:

- Moderate or severe mental retardation;
- A serious physical disability; or



- An extraordinary physical or psychological condition of such complexity that the beneficiary is homebound.

Multiple disabilities involving two or more separate body systems may result in a qualifying condition determination.

TRICARE ECHO requires all eligible beneficiaries to enroll in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) of their sponsors' military service and to register with their regional contractor or Overseas TRICARE Area Office to obtain ECHO benefit authorization.

To complete EFMP enrollment, eligible beneficiaries must obtain a DD form 2792 (medical summary) and/or DD form 2792-1 (special education/early intervention summary) and submit the form(s) to their special needs/EFMP coordinator for processing.

Upon completion of enrollment, the sponsor must show proof of enrollment to the regional contractor for registration into the ECHO program. The Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System will be updated to indicate the beneficiary is eligible for ECHO.

Beneficiaries must use public funds or programs first to the extent they are available and adequate for TRICARE ECHO benefits related to training, rehabilitation, special education, assistive technology devices, institutional care in private, non-profit, public, state institutions or other medical facilities and if appropriate, transportation to and from such institutions and facilities.

For more information about ECHO benefits, eligibility requirements, updates, and EFMP registration, beneficiaries may visit the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/echo.

Beneficiaries may also call their regional contractor: TRICARE Regional Office (TRO) North (1-877-874-2273); TRO South (1-800-444-5445); or TRO West (1-888-874-9378). Overseas beneficiaries may call 1-888-777-8343.

For better or worse?

Army divorce rates at all-time high

By Dave Crozier

Since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, members of the military have been embroiled in the Global War on Terrorism. While military life can be stressful in and of itself, increased operations tempo has placed a larger stress on military marriages, especially those in the Army.

“A recent Defense Manpower Data Center report that covers 2001 though 2004 shows that the rates of divorces jumped 28 percent for the enlisted force and 78 percent for the officer corps,” said Chaplain (Col.) Glen Bloomstrom, director of Ministry Initiatives for the Chief of Chaplains. “That report got a lot of people’s attention. Normally, divorce rates fluctuate up or down, say 10 percent, 18 percent at most, but this jump was fairly significant.”

Bloomstrom acknowledged the report as raw data and did not take into account dual-military couples counted as two separate divorces. The report also did not state any reason for the increase in divorces.

“However, we gave our reason to the [Army] Chief of Staff and to senators, that at least anecdotally,

one of the primary reasons for this is a response to [current] operations,” he said. “We have not done any further analysis on this although we understand [a company] has been contracted to do a detailed analysis of the divorce-rate data.”

Bloomstrom said he could talk anecdotally all day about the reasons, but simply the biggest change has been the Global War on Terrorism and the shift in the way the Army does business.

“This data goes back to the early 1990s, even before the Gulf War. And after the Gulf War we did not see a significant jump in divorce rates,” Bloomstrom said. “So the first and clearest indicator to us is the operations tempo. We have people that are now going on their second and third deployments to Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.”

Lt. Col. Peter Frederich, Family Ministry action officer for the Chief of Chaplains, agreed saying feedback he is getting from the field would corroborate their suspicions.

“We don’t have firm statistical data, but we have put feelers out; and what we are hearing is it’s the high operations tempo. Families are under greater stress than before and the most obvious contributor is the combat deployments,” Frederich said. “First of all, there are the natural stressors which are further stressed by combat deployments: finances, children, sex and so on. Then there is the issue with Soldiers coming back and struggling over those issues combined with additional stressors from having to deal with taking a life and experiencing life constantly at risk. That takes a real toll on the Soldiers and they bring that home to their marriages.”

Bloomstrom said an issue to look at is the fact that the Army has a very young population compared to the civilian community and he believes many of the marriages are newly-forming.

“When you are transitioning from being single to being a couple it takes time and if during that period, say three years, you’ve only spent eight months, or one-third, of that time with your new spouse, that transition is just not happening,” he said. “That expectation of marriage is not met when you have back-to-back deployments. Put that together with a transitioning marriage. Sometimes folks return and they have changed on both sides.”



Bloomstrom said during this time of separation many spouses who wanted to be dependent on their Soldiers become independent and begin to reevaluate if they want to remain married. Then there are the Soldiers who have met their enlistment requirement and the spouse says it is time to get out. When they don't it causes problems.

"They say, 'Okay, you've served in combat. You achieved your goal. Now we need to get out.' And we are having a fairly high reenlistment rate right now because many Soldiers are finding this kind of life, while dangerous, very rewarding," Bloomstrom said. "So the Soldier decides to stay in and the spouse decides [he or she] didn't sign up to be married part time."

Another issue that arises is the conflict resulting from the residual effects of combat. For example, Bloomstrom said, the spouse sees the Soldier as edgy, angry and impatient, and urges the Soldier to seek assistance, but he or she refuses to listen stating he or she doesn't need help; there isn't a problem. If the Soldier would just go and talk with a counselor; the Soldier may realize he or she has not dealt with some of the issues of combat.

"In our culture it is okay to exhibit anger. But under that anger, underneath those emotions is sadness, confusion, shame, survival guilt – any number of things – and it is fueling the anger that is enacting itself within the marriage," he said. "None of this is statistically verifiable, but all you have to do is listen to your Soldiers and I believe you will hear many of these kinds of stories."

Bloomstrom urges Soldiers to talk to their chaplain if they are experiencing these issues.

"Often a Soldier can make meaning out of why they lived and others didn't in a spiritual sense," he said. "They can also get right in a sense that they can make peace with some of these troubling thoughts, these things they may have regrets for."

One important thing to note about talking to a chaplain, Bloomstrom said, is that it is confidential. The Soldier shouldn't feel embarrassed to talk about these issues because many of the chaplains in the field have gone through similar experiences.

Another avenue of discussion Bloomstrom strongly recommends is for NCOs to encourage Soldiers

to talk about their issues. He also recommends that NCOs talk about their own personal struggles and how they were able to seek help – that there is nothing shameful in doing that – and there doesn't need to be any stigma placed on talking. He added the best place to start discussing the issues, however, is within the marriage itself.

"For many of our married population that marriage relationship is where you have the greatest support, the greatest encouragement to help you through these kinds of challenges. That is why it is so very important to listen to our spouses if they are telling us, 'hey, you may say there is nothing wrong, but you've changed, and why don't we go together and talk to somebody about this,'" Bloomstrom said. "And it doesn't matter if that person is a chaplain or somebody else."

One program that addresses many domestic issues is the Army's Family Advocacy Program. Richard Stagliano, supervisory Social Worker, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, said, that while the program is mainly set up to prevent, identify, report, investigate and treat spouse and child abuse, Family Advocacy also provides classes on couple communication.

"We don't do marriage counseling so if you are looking for that we would probably send you to see the chaplain," Stagliano



A recent Defense Manpower Center Report showed that enlisted divorces rose more than 28 percent between 2001 and 2004. In the officer ranks the increase was 78 percent. The Army has allocated an additional \$5.4 million towards family programs in hopes of addressing the issue.

said. "But one of the initiatives we have, which is not so much a Family Advocacy initiative, but a Headquarters, Department of the Army initiative, is the Soldier and Family Life Consultants. They are licensed therapists who can go in and assist with counseling on issues that arise due to the Global War on Terrorism."

The initiative is part of the reunion and reintegration piece of prevention and identification of Soldier issues, Stagliano said.

"In other words, [these consultants] will go out and talk to Soldiers and talk to family members. Then after they hear what they have to say, they kind of triage them and refer them to where they need to go and get assistance," he said. "They are like a consultant liaison in that they meet with all the agencies that are in the community to coordinate issues."

Stagliano said the consultants are currently only available at Forts Dix, N.J.; McCoy, Wis.; Benning, Ga.; Riley, Kan.; Bragg, N.C.; Hood, Texas; and Camp Shelby, Miss.

He added however that more support and services are available at Army Once Source, <http://www.armyonesource.com/>, where Soldiers and

family members can link up with licensed counselors outside of the Army system at no cost to the Soldier for up to six times to address any one issue.

"Let's say my wife and I are having an issue. It doesn't matter what the issue is, and I don't want to use the Army system. We now have a world-wide system in place

where they can call a 1-800 number and say they wish to talk to somebody," Stagliano said. "It doesn't matter where they live if they want to see a therapist. We have a mechanism in place where they can do that."

These free counselings are for the entire family, Stagliano said. So if the issue involves the Soldier, the spouse and child or children, each has the ability to receive six free counseling sessions per issue. Army One Source also has links to other services including: parenting and childcare, personal and family readiness, education, finance, legal services, everyday issues and more.

While the divorce statistics compiled by the Defense Manpower Data Center refer only active-duty Soldiers, similar marital and domestic issues are occurring within the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

Col. Anthony E. Baker Sr., chief of Family Programs for the National Guard Bureau, said what the National Guard Bureau did was to look at the whole separation and reunion piece of the marriage issue holistically.

"We started asking ourselves what could we do to lessen the stressors associated with separation and reunion. We looked at marriage enrichment, which we provide for Soldiers and their families after deployment. Then we started looking a little deeper and asked what we could do prior to [deployment]," he said. "So one of the things we are trying to do is help individuals understand the separation and reunion process."

Baker said the National Guard has developed a web of services around the family that helps them to deal with the anxieties caused by long deployments. Their Web site, the National Guard Bureau Family Program Online Community, <http://www.guardfamily.org/>, specifically addresses the issues, Baker said. The Guard also does briefings through the state Family Program Directors to address separation and reunion, deployment issues and overall education on what it is going to be like when the couple is separated.

Unlike the active-duty force, citizen-soldiers and their families don't always live close to an Army installation with all its resources, Baker notes.

"That's where the beauty of our program comes into play. If you look at what the Guard has in place you will see that we have more than 3,300 armories in 2,700 communities across the country. Then we have the Family Assistance Centers, about 422 of them. Then there are the 54 Joint Forces headquarters, one per state. We also have 88 wings that exist across the country

with wing family coordinator programs on those bases. There is also Readiness Group Assistance which handles all of the volunteer corps such as the Family Readiness Groups and their members. The system also includes referrals to local outreach services, state and local health facilities, as well as

access to TriCare and VA benefits.

"So you see we have created this web around the family and it doesn't matter whether they go to any of these places, they will receive the same basic level of service," Baker said. "And it's available 24-7. If I have an issue I can call Military One Source (<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>) at 1-800-342-9647 from where I live and start getting assistance [right away]."

Both the National Guard and the Army Reserve rely heavily on the Chaplain Corps to be the ears on the ground for Soldier issues.

"We use the chaplains quite heavily in the Guard. They are our first line of defense as we call them," Baker said. "We need someone there that is non-threatening and the chaplains seem to do a good job of drawing out information from the Soldiers and helping to make referral recommendations for follow-on assistance."

An initiative that encompasses the entire Army, both active and reserve components, are weekend marriage workshops – Strong Bonds, Building Strong and Ready Families, marriage enrichment seminars, and marriage education seminars – that are designed specifically to address the issues of marriage, separation and communication.

"I think the most important thing is the way that we are addressing the issue – holding these workshops, bringing couples together and addressing communication skills," said Chaplain (Lt. Col) Mark Griffith, chief of Project Management, Army Reserve for the Command Chaplains Office. "The pro-

"The American divorce rate today is nearly twice that of 1960, but has declined slightly since hitting the highest point in our history in the early 1980s. For the average couple marrying in recent years, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation remains between 40 and 50 percent."

*The State Of Our Unions
The National Marriage Project
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
July 2005*

"If you can teach couples how to communicate, how to conflict well so they can get over it easier, their [marriage] survival rate and happiness rate is going to go up dramatically. Marriage has always been a challenge. The expectation of marriage these days is a little different, but it has always been hard to maintain."

*Lt. Col. Peter Frederich
Family Ministry action officer for the Chief of Chaplains*

gram really came about as a result of the whole deployment cycle support and the Fort Bragg [N.C.] violence incidents. It started out as one-day workshops dealing with reunion skills coming back from deployments and it has grown into a weekend-long workshop."

Griffith said currently they are unable to track the results of the these workshops, but are working on creating a Web-based survey where each participant can provide feedback for future reference.

"The feedback we have been getting, however, has been outstanding. Couples are saying this is the best thing the Army has ever done for us," Griffith said. "It started out small in 2002 and the first year we saw a major increase in program participation was in 2004. In 2005 it went Army Reserve-wide."

On the Guard side of the house, Baker said he too is hearing great things about the workshops and noted that participation is growing. Baker believes also that communication is key to a healthy marriage and suggests that couples faced with pending separation and reunion issues should practice being separated to test and develop their communications skills.

"Couples can start preparing by spending time together away from their children so they can understand what expectations have to be met at that time. They can talk about what they need to know, how to write a plan and then plan outings with the children to set them up for the process," Baker said. "The other piece is to act like you are already separated and write letters or e-mails to each other and when you miss one you will understand the feeling that comes with the absence of the communication. Then they need to express that feeling. And finally make good efforts to talk to each other during the day."

Frederich points to some other helpful programs for those thinking of getting married, to avoid becoming a statistic.

"There is a program called How to Pick a Partner, subtitled, How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk, which makes obvious sense because many of these marriages are set up for success or failure when they first start out," Frederich said. "The Web site is <http://www.nojerks.com/>."

"You know a lot of young people just jump into some of these relationships and they are more trouble than they are worth," Bloomstrom said. "They just don't think about the long-term relationship. They think about other things rather than living many years with the people they choose to marry."

Another program Bloomstrom touts is PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program), <http://www.prepinc.com/index.asp>, which is geared towards helping partners say

what they need to say, get to the heart of problems and increase their connection with each other.

In any event, Soldiers and their families are under greater stress than ever before because of the Global War on Terrorism, increased operations tempo and multiple deployments. Army leadership and experts around the world agree that communication is the key to solving most any issue in today's military marriages.

"I think we have excellent data that tells us if you can teach couples how to communicate and how to conflict well so they can get over it easier, their [marriage] survival rate and happiness rate is going to go up dramatically," Frederich said. "Marriage has always been a challenge. The expectation of marriage these days is a little different, but it has always been hard to maintain."

Bloomstrom points out that while the divorce rates are up for the Army, the numbers are still lower than the general U.S. population. The Army funded the family support programs with an additional \$5.4 million to address the issue, he added.

"The Army leadership has put its money where its mouth is. We are talking about several million dollars that continues to stay in the budget to be able to do marriage education," Bloomstrom said. Where we really need the continued support of the NCOs is to get the word out to their Soldiers about these great programs, services, retreats and conferences, and as I said before, attend them themselves to set the example."



Online resources/ services

Army One Source – <http://www.armyonesource.com/> or call 1-800-464-8107; links to all services.

Military One Source – <http://www.militaryonesource.com/> or call 1-800-342-9647; links to all services.

Army Families Online – <http://www.wblo.org/> or call 1-800-833-6622; provided by Army Well-Being.

The Office of Chief of Chaplains – <http://www.chapnet.army.mil/> with links to Building Strong and Ready Families information.

National Guard Bureau Family Online Community – <http://www.guardfamily.org/> numerous links to benefits and services.

The American Red Cross – <http://www.redcross.org/>; links to services available to both active-and reserve-component Soldiers and their families.

Department of Veterans Affairs – <http://www.va.gov/>.
Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program – <http://www.prepinc.com/index.asp>; overview of program.

How to Pick a Partner – <http://www.nojerks.com/>; overview of program for Single Soldiers.

Military Family Resource Center -- <http://www.mfrc-dodqol.org/about.cfm>.

If you can't find the help you are seeking through these resources, contact your unit chaplain for assistance.

Soldiers test mettle in all-Army competition

By Sgt. Maj. Lisa Hunter

They are among the Army's best and brightest, representing all of the Army's major commands. Their career branches are as diverse as they are: Finance, Special Forces, Logistics, with ranks ranging from private first class to sergeant first class. They max their APFTs. They know the FMs and ARs. They live the Warrior Ethos. And, they're competitive – very competitive. These 10 Soldiers and 10 NCOs converged on Fort Lee, Va., Sept. 25 to Oct. 1, to test their skills and determine once and for all who among them are the best of the best at the fourth annual Department of the Army Soldier and NCO of the Year Competition.

"The NCO and Soldier of the Year program is a culmination of what started with a company commander and a first sergeant," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston, speaking to the competitors and distinguished guests at the awards luncheon. He added the competition helps the Army to grow and motivate our Soldiers and noncommissioned officers. The program promotes

Soldiers' self development and self study and is just one factor in what sets our Army apart from other armies.

While traveling to central Virginia in the early fall doesn't seem like much of a hardship, the competition was no boondoggle for the competitors. During the first two days, the competitors took it easy, in a manner of speaking. On Day 1, they knocked out their board appearances and on Day 2 drew their field gear.

The real challenges began at 0530 on Day 3. First up was the Army

Physical Fitness Test in the early morning chill. After a short break to clean up and eat, they were at it again: an hour-long written exam, followed by an hour-long written essay. At that point, they may have been ready to call it a day, but the day was far from over. From there, it was off to the land navigation course. They did get a short break before launching onto the course, thanks to a surprise visit from Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey.

"Courage and fortitude and what you do to show your dedication to your country... your commitment to defending our way of life," Harvey said. "It's quite a pleasure for me to meet such an outstanding group. You're the best of the best, and you really exemplify the Warrior Ethos."

Looking at the competitors, gathered on bleachers under a camo net, the group could easily have posed for a recruiting poster. Spc. James Halog was the youngest of the competitors at age 20. With only 18 months of service under his belt, Halog, the U.S. Army, Europe Soldier of the Year, won his first board a year earlier at Fort Lee when he was selected as the Soldier of the Month for his Initial Entry Training company. Sgt. 1st Class Wendell Huddleston, the Training and Doctrine Command NCO



Photo by Dave Crozier

Warrior tasks were an integral part of the field competition. Above, Spc. Robert A. Wallace, Soldier of the Year for 8th U.S. Army, Korea, evaluates a casualty. Soldiers also had to contend with handling prisoners.



Photo by Dave Crozier

Spc. Jeanelle Joseph, Soldier of the Year for the Training and Doctrine Command, crunches out a sit-up during the APFT portion of the competition.



Photo by Dave Crozier

Day 1 of the competition set the standard as the competitors made their board appearances. Above, Sgt. Jeremy S. Kamphuis answers questions from Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston and other board members.

of the Year was the highest ranking competitor. Age 35, he had the dubious distinction of being the oldest Soldier to compete this year. Each of the competitors had their own, unique reasons for competing.

“When I won the brigade board, I said, ‘This is cool.’ I didn’t know there was a Department of the Army board. [When I found out], I said, ‘I’m going to go for it,’” said Staff Sgt. Thomas Bean Jr., 8th U.S. Army, Korea NCO of the Year.

Others looked at it from a different perspective. “This is a task, a mission. My command sergeant major told me to go in there and win the board.” said Sgt. David Knotts Jr., the Space and Missile Defense Command NCO of the Year. “It was about representing my unit, my Soldiers, and it was important to me to set a standard, a precedent for my unit.”

Spc. Eric Przybylski, a finance clerk and the U.S. Army Pacific Command Soldier of the Year, said he did it to gain respect and make a name for himself. Spc. John Wild, Army Materiel Command Soldier of the Year, did it because he likes competing.

With the break over, the Soldiers and NCOs set out on the day land navigation course. Clad in Interceptor Body Armor, Kevlar and carrying a 30-pound rucksack, the competitors set out on the three-hour course. But at the end of the course, there was only a brief rest for the weary before they headed out to run the night land nav course.

“I’ve learned I can push myself further than I thought I could initially,” said Sgt. Jamie Norton, the Medical Command NCO of the Year. “There were a couple of times during the night land nav, where I was just going to call it a night. And, sure enough, I ended up finding the points.” While some of the competitors admitted they had attempted to size up their competition, they quickly learned as one competitor said: “Looks

can be deceiving.” But more often, the Soldiers displayed a sense of camaraderie and an inherent ability to work together that even Soldiers competing against each other cannot shake off.

Mentorship is also a major factor throughout the competition. Each Soldier and NCO was accompanied by his or her sponsor who had worked with the individual competitor through every level of the competition. The sponsors traveled to Fort Lee with the competitors to assist and provide moral support during their last leg of the competition.

After a few hours rest, the competitors hit the ranges and training areas on Day 4. The Soldiers qualified with their M16s and conducted a series of Warrior tasks that included reassembling an M16 rifle in blackout conditions and evaluating a screaming, bleeding and not-very-cooperative casualty.

“I have done first aid, but each time it was with mannequins. This time having a Soldier just screaming in pain, it put you

in a realistic environment,” said Spc. Jeanelle Joseph, the Training and Doctrine Command Soldier of the Year. Joseph, a naturalized U.S. citizen who hails originally from Haiti, has only been in the United States for three years. She joined the Army two months after she arrived.

But the competitors still had miles to go before they slept. After a short break, the competitors headed out to meet their last set of challenges. The Sergeant Major of the Army prepared them for the long night ahead of them when he told them during their brief recess that there would be times during the last leg when they would feel like giving up. “Don’t give up. When you come back in at zero-eight, it will all be done... When you get to Washington, D.C. they’re going to treat you like the heroes you are,” Preston said.

Armed with those sage words, the Soldiers set out to face their last set of challenges that would take them through the rest of the night and into the morning. They started



Photo by Dave Crozier

Sgt. Javier Najera, Soldier of the Year for U.S. Army Medical Command, plots his points for the land navigation course.

out with night firing on a range lit up by flares and artillery simulators. From there, they went right into their “mystery event,” yet another series of Warrior tasks. By the time the last of the competitors were dragging in, cold and tired, it was time to move to the start point for the six-mile ruck march. After a sleepless night, loaded down in Kevlar, 30-pound rucksack and toting an M16, the Soldiers set out on what had to seem like an endless walk. Well, maybe not for Norton who ran the entire six miles, finishing in an hour flat.

Day 4 ran into Day 5. At the end of the ruck march, the competitors graciously accepted their accolades as they tended to their sore feet and donned fresh socks. It was mid-morning on Friday. They had the rest of the day to sleep before they traveled to Washington, D.C. the following day, Oct. 1. While the points were all in and tallied, the competitors still did not know who among them would be selected as the best of the best.

Their moment of truth finally came on Oct. 3, when during the Sergeant Major of the Army’s luncheon at the AUSA Convention in Washington, D.C., Preston, pointing out that the winners were actually the best among thousands of Soldiers and NCOs who had competed at boards around the Army, finally announced the winners: Sgt. Jeremy Kamphuis, a military policeman and U.S. Army Europe’s NCO of the Year; and newly-promoted Sgt.

Chad Steuck, an infantryman and Forces Command’s Soldier of the Year.

Steuck and Kamphuis will represent the Army at major events throughout the

next year. In addition, all of the competitors received several prizes from various sponsors, with the winners taking home quite a bundle of gifts, ranging from an all-expense-paid trip to Shades of Green in Florida to several plaques.

“The best part of winning is not the stuff. It’s the honor of being picked and setting the standard,” Kamphuis said. “Being able to compete is its own reward.” Kamphuis competed at the battalion board three days after returning from redeployment block leave. He completed his bachelor’s degree in criminal justice while deployed in Iraq and is now working on his master’s in criminal justice.

Steuck, on the other hand, may not be around to enjoy his new found celebrity. He is slated to deploy to Afghanistan in the near future. “I’m looking forward to taking care of my Soldiers while I’m there,” he said. “When you’re surrounded by people who strive for excellence, you tend to do so yourself.”

From a logistics and support perspective, the many Soldiers



Photo by Dave Crozier

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston talks with the competitors and their sponsors after a long day of competition encouraging them to press on.



Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Lee Public Affairs

Above, Sgt. Louissa Balthazard, NCO of the Year for U.S. Pacific Command, moves toward her next point on the land navigation course. Soldiers also completed a night land navigation course. Right, the competitors adjust the sights on their M-16s during qualification.



Photo by Dave Crozier

Army Soldier/NCO of the Year

who worked behind the scenes at Fort Lee, Human Resources Command and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy are already planning for next year's competition. Hundreds of people worked thousands of hours to make the competition a success, Preston said. The goal of the Fort Lee Soldiers and civilians who worked as medics, evaluators and command and control, and in other support roles was to "provide the 'best of the best' with seamless support," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley J. Peat, command sergeant major for the Combined Arms Support Command and Fort Lee. "It's an excellent project. You can tell the time they put into this was well spent," said Spc. Philip Fox, National Capital Region Soldier of the Year. "I think the competition is run very professionally and really smooth. You can tell you're at the next level here," Huddleston added.

As for next year's competition, several of the competitors offered astute advice, as is oftentimes the case when it's the voice of experience. "Put as much in to it as you can. Even if you don't win, it's definitely worth it just for the experience. I've had a blast at the boards so far," said Staff Sgt. Eric

Hayes, the Forces Command NCO of the Year.

"Live and exemplify the Army Values. Internalize the Warrior Ethos and the four tenets of it, and always give 110 percent," Kamphuis said. He also encouraged future competitors to study every field manual and Army regulation they can find, as well as build a well-rounded physical fitness regimen that includes ruck marching, pull-ups and other exercises that build endurance.

Kamphuis admits he didn't expect to win. He also said the various levels of competition have taught him a few things. "I've learned new ways to train Soldiers. I learned new ways to train myself just by going out there, seeing and doing," he said.

Who will win next year's competition is anyone's guess. But every Soldier starts out on an equal footing by volunteering to compete for that first Soldier or NCO of the Month board. "Push yourself to the limits and then some," said Spc. Robert Wallace, the Eighth U.S. Army, Korea Soldier of the Year. "You can go as far as you want to go; you just have to take the initiative and get up and do it."

2005 Department of the Army NCO of the Year



Sgt. Jeremy Kamphuis U.S. Army Europe

Sgt. Kamphuis serves as a Military Police Specialist with 127th Military Police Company, Hanau, Germany. A native of Grand Rapids, Mich., he looks for training opportunities. He has a warfighting team and believes that he has to keep himself trained.

2005 Department of the Army Soldier of the Year



Sgt. Eric Steuck U.S. Army Forces Command

Cpl. Steuck serves as an Infantryman with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light), Fort Polk, La. He is from Lynchburg, Va. Cpl. Hayes plans to attend Ranger School and become a command sergeant major. He enjoys photography and playing sports.

Army Soldier/NCO of the Year

Spc. Javier L. Najera - U.S. Army

Medical Command serves as a Medical Laboratory Specialist at Madigan Army Medical Center, Fort Lewis, Wash. A native of El Paso, Texas, he plans to train and lead Soldiers as an NCO, obtain American Society of Clinical Pathology certification, earn an associates degree in medical technology and the rank of command sergeant major. He enjoys spending time with his wife, playing soccer and restoring vehicles.



Spc. Matthew Funk - U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command

serves as a Satellite Communications Systems Operator/Maintainer with Company E, 1st Satellite Control Battalion, Okinawa, Japan. A native of New Concord, Ohio, Spc. Funk plans to become a noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Army. He enjoys, soccer, running, hiking, rock climbing, river rafting, computers and electronics.



Spc. Christopher R. Shanahan - U.S. Army Special Operations Command

serves as an Infantryman with 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Ga. A native of Queensbury, N.Y., he plans to get promoted to staff sergeant, become a squad leader, complete multiple military schools and continue to progress within USASOC, as he earns his bachelor's and masters degree. He enjoys playing bagpipes and guitar.



Sgt. Kyle Vreeman - U.S. Army Special Operations Command

serves as a Junior Weapons sergeant with Company B, 1st Special Forces Group (A), Fort Lewis, Wash. A native of Moorehead, Minn., he plans to train to the highest level of proficiency prior to deploying in January and to retire from the Army having served as a team sergeant. He enjoys mountaineering, rockclimbing, skydiving, scuba diving, photography and car craft.



Sgt. Jamie Norton - U.S. Army Medical Command

serves as a Healthcare Specialist at Womack Army Medical Center, Fort Bragg, N.C. A native of Waverly, Iowa, he plans to be the Department of the Army NCO of the Year and earn a master's degree in exercise physiology. He enjoys basketball, softball, reading and volunteering as an assistant youth basketball coach.



Staff Sgt. Thomas Bean, Jr. - 8th U.S. Army, Korea

serves as a Canon Crewmember with Battery C, 1-38th Field Artillery, Camp Stanley, Korea. A native of Pottstown, Pa., he plans on becoming a command sergeant major, retire from the Army and work in real estate. He enjoys classic Mustangs, his favorite author, Anne Rice, and being a Soldier.



Sgt. 1st Class Wendell Huddleston - Training and Doctrine Command

is a Patriot Missile Operator serving as an instructor at the NCO Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. A native of Springtown, Texas, he plans to become a command sergeant major, finish his bachelor's degree in history, retire from the Army and become a history teacher. He has donated more than 50 hours of community service to various organizations in El Paso, Texas.



Sgt. David Knotts, Jr. - U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command

serves as a Military Police Officer with A Company, 49th Space Battalion (GMD), Fort Greely, Alaska. A native of Cheyenne, Wyo., he plans to complete the Special Forces qualification course and complete an associates degree in criminal justice. He also enjoys hunting, fishing, geography and panning for gold.



Staff Sgt. Eric Hayes - U.S. Army Forces Command

serves as a Cavalry Scout with HHT, 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division (Light), Fort Drum, N.Y.. A native of Rochester, Minn., he plans to attend Ranger and Special Forces schools to serve his country in the greatest capacity. He enjoys spending time with his family, running and weight training.



Pfc. Robert Wallace - 8th U.S. Army, Korea

serves as a Petroleum Supply Specialist with 46th Transportation Company, Camp Humphreys, Korea. A native of Kentwood, La., his plans are to earn a degree in psychology and retire as the command sergeant major in the Army. He gets satisfaction from helping people recover from alcohol and substance abuse.



A closer look at this year's competitors

Pfc. Jeanelle Joseph - Training and Doctrine Command serves as a Unit Supply Specialist with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 54th Infantry, Fort Benning, Ga. A native of Miami, Fla., Joseph is interested in an associate's degree in nursing and attending Officer Candidate School, and achieving the rank of colonel. She enjoys reading, drawing and cross stitching.



Spc. Eric Przybylski - U.S. Army Pacific
Spc. Przybylski serves as a Financial Management Technician with A Company, 267th Finance Battalion, Fort Richardson, Alaska. A native of St. Cloud, Minn., he plans to retire from the Army and serve as President of the United States. He enjoys running, golfing and basketball.



Pfc. James Halog - U.S. Army Europe serves as a Parachute Rigger with 5th Quartermaster Detachment, 21st Theater Support Command, Kaiserslautern, Germany. A native of San Francisco, Calif., Pfc. Halog says his objective is to live the Warrior Ethos.



Spc. John Wild - U.S. Army Materiel Command serves as an Infantryman with Army Soldier Systems Center, Natick, Mass.. A native of Wolcott, N.Y., he plans to complete a full career and retire from the U.S. Army with the goal of becoming a flight warrant officer. He enjoys fishing, hunting, paintball and four-wheeling. He is involved in his community and volunteers at the Greyhound and Friends dog shelter.



Sgt. Karen Antonyan - Military District of Washington serves as a Rescue Engineer with the Military District of Washington, Fort Belvoir, Va. A native of Las Vegas, Nev., he plans to obtain a degree in International Relationships, become an ambassador and win the Army NCO of the Year Competition. He was born in the Ukraine and competed in last year's competition as a specialist. He enjoys paintball, reading and wrestling.



Staff Sgt. Christine Shannon - U.S. Army Materiel Command serves as an Army Bandsperson with the 389th Army Band, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. A native of Dayton, Ohio, she plans to retire from the Army in five years then begin a new career. She enjoys her job which she shares with her husband allowing them to spend more time together. In their six-year marriage they have shared five assignments.



Sgt. Marie Balthazard - U.S. Army Pacific serves as a Paralegal Specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Area Support Group, Camp Zama, Japan. A native of Orlando, Fla., she plans to earn a Doctorate in psychology and retire as a command sergeant major. She enjoys reading and playing the guitar.



2005 Winners

Sgt. Steuck
Sgt. Kamphuis



Pfc. Philip Fox - U.S. Forces Korea 8th Army serves as a Military Intelligence Analyst with HHD, 524th Military Intelligence Battalion, 501st Military Intelligence Brigade, Yong San, Korea. A native of Cable, Wis., he plans to obtain a master's degree in Law Enforcement and retire as a command sergeant major. He plays drums in a three-man rock band and teaches English to Korean elementary school children.



The Culture of Iraq

Deploying to Iraq: What to know before you go

By Staff Sgt. Krishna M. Gamble

The way a hand is waved, a finger pointed or sounds made with a tongue can mean entirely different things to an American and an Iraqi — and the action may be very offensive. For example, it is customary for most Americans to shake hands or embrace when greeting one another. In Iraq, people of the same gender will often hold hands while talking or walking and kiss when greeting, but public affection between people of the opposite sex is discouraged. Americans tend to like their personal space, while Iraqis touch each other and stand closer together.

These tidbits of information may not be commonly known to most Soldiers. Because of that, the U.S. military has taken pains to better educate the troops. Part of that education includes handing out laminated Iraq Culture Smart Cards to U.S. troops — a 16-page folding card with information ranging from religious holidays to cultural customs. Another educational tool is the cultural awareness classes which Soldiers attend prior to deployments to Iraq.

“It gives deploying Soldiers an understanding of how their actions, words and behavior may affect the perception of the host country citizens,” said Sgt. Maj. Allen Pinckney, U.S. Army G-3 Sergeant Major.

“Cultural awareness helps the individual Soldier understand our partners and adversaries,” said Sgt. Maj. Fernando Martinez Irizarry, U.S. Army G-2 Sergeant Major. “Organizationally, cultural awareness enhances cross cultural communications and understanding of the operational environment, [as well as] helps us understand second-and third-order effects of operations and consider our adversaries’ point of view.”

Active-duty Soldiers regularly receive this type of training when they PCS overseas and prior to deploying. Forces Command mandates a one-week cultural awareness course for all deploying units, Irizarry said. The Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) directed the development of standardized cultural training programs. TRADOC also designated cultural training as common core for all levels of professional military



Photo by Sabah Arar/AFP Photo

An Iraqi student from Baghdad's Arts College paints the college's outside wall on Jan. 3, 2004 in central Baghdad.

education. The United States Army Intelligence Center (USAIC) developed a cultural training program for use by all major Army commands. The USAIC 80-hour training support package contains modular blocks of instruction tailored to their specific needs, train at a replacement center and the instructional training base. Mobile training teams are available to conduct train-the-trainer courses. Lessons are being developed for all Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian theaters.

At Fort Bliss, Texas, a major deployment center, National Guard and Reserve units are receiving these classes. The Edge Research and Development (The Edge), a contract agency, conducts this mobilization and deployment training for all National Guard and Reserve units that process through Fort Bliss.

“We give this briefing to everyone who deploys to Southwest Asia,” said Leamon Montgomery, a manager with The Edge. “Basically, we want to [introduce them to] some of the cultures that they will run into because it’s different from some of the things we do here at home, and there are some things that [the Soldiers need to understand and] respect.”

See Culture, page 23

Iraq Culture Smart Card

Guide for Cultural Awareness



GTA 24-01-003

November 2004

Ethnic Groups

Arabs: 18.5 Million

- Descended from nomadic Bedouin tribes.
- Culture closely intertwined with Islam.
- 65% Shia Muslim / 35% Sunni Muslim
- Most are members of one of Iraq's 150 tribes.

Kurds: 5 Million

- Ethnically distinct from Arabs, Turks, and Persians (Iranians).
- "Kurd" originally used to denote non-Arab nomads.
- Speak Kurdish, a language distinct from Arabic and Turkish; similar to Persian.
- Most are Sunni Muslim. Sufi orders are prevalent and influential.

Assyrians/Chaldeans: 800,000

- Claim to be heirs to the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia.
- Christians.
- Live in urban areas and throughout northern Iraq.

Turkoman: 500,000

- Ethnically related to Turks and Azeris.
- 66% are Sunni Muslims and 33% Shia Muslims.
- Primary language is Turkish. Most are also fluent in Arabic.
- Most live in Iraq's northern cities.



Religion

FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The practice of Islam is based upon five pillars:



1 SHAHADA

Faith:
Allah is the
one true God.



2 SALAT

Prayer:
Pray five
times a day.



3 ZAKAT

Alms/Charity:
Assistance to
the needy.



4 SAWM

Fasting: Ramadan—
month of fasting
from sunrise to sunset.



5 HAJJ

Pilgrimage
to Mecca in
Saudi Arabia.

ISLAMIC FLAG MEANINGS



Muslims often fly colored flags to observe various holidays or dates of personal significance. Each color carries a specific meaning. Green is the color of Islam and is particularly meaningful to the Shia.

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS TERMS

- **KORAN:** Islamic Holy Book, given by Allah to the Prophet Mohammad.
- **MOSQUE:** Muslim house of worship.
- **SUNNI and SHIA:** Two main branches of Islam.
- **SHIA:** Form majority of Muslims in Iraq, but less than 10% globally.
- **SUNNI:** Call their religious leaders Imams, but to Shia, the Imam is a supreme religious leader descended from Mohammad.
- **SHARIA:** Muslim law.
- **FATWA:** An order from a Muslim religious leader.
- **WAHABBIS:** Puritanical Muslims from the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam. Never shave their beards.
- **MADRASSAH:** Islamic educational system.
- **MULLAH:** Local religious leader.

Cultural Groups

ARABS

- Arabs view Kurds as separatists within Iraq and are wary of their desire for autonomy.
- Arabs view the Christian Assyrians and Chaldeans as Iraqis, but recent Islamic extremism has sparked some hostility towards them.
- Arabs look down upon the Turkoman because Arabs generally view Turkish culture as inferior.
- Arabs view Iranian Persians negatively and fear the historically strong political and cultural influence of Persia.

SHIA AND SUNNI ARAB

- Tension exists between Shia and Sunni Arabs over access to political and economic power.
- Sunnis blame Shia for undermining the mythical unity of Islam and they view them as less loyal to Iraq.
- Shia blame Sunnis for marginalizing the Shia majority and resent Sunni attempts to question their loyalty to Iraq.

KURDS

- Kurds are openly hostile toward Iraqi Arabs and seek to assert their political and cultural independence.
- Kurds are distrustful of the Turkoman, as they have competing claims over Kirkuk.
- Kurds do not interact much with Assyrians and Chaldeans.

ASSYRIANS

- Assyrians experienced persecution by both Kurds and Arabs.
- Assyrians recognize their minority status as a religious and ethnic group.
- Assyrians believe they have much in common with the Chaldeans, including ethnic and Christian religious heritage.

CHALDEANS

- Chaldeans rejoined the Catholic Church in the 18th century and do not believe that they are similar to Assyrians.
- As a religious and ethnic minority, the Chaldeans distrust both Kurdish and Arab intentions.
- They have peaceful relations with Turkoman.

TURKOMAN

- Turkoman view themselves as a marginalized repressed minority and seek greater influence in Iraq.
- Turkoman fear Kurds, and there has been a long history of conflict between the two groups.
- Turkoman identify closely with Turkey and the Ottoman period of Iraqi history.

Religious Holidays

KEY RELIGIOUS DATES

Islamic Calendar follows the lunar cycle. Below are the approximate dates on a Western Calendar.

2005

19-23 Jan 05 **Hajj**
 21 - Jan 05 **Eid al-Adha**
 10 Feb 05 **Islamic New Year**
 19 Feb 05 **Ashura**
 21 Apr 05 **Mohammad's Birthday**
 05 Oct - 04 Nov 05 **Ramadan**
 29 Oct 05 **Layla tul-Quar**
 03 Nov 05 **Eid al-Fitr**

2006

29 Dec - 01 Jan 06 **Hajj**
 10 Jan 06 **Eid al-Adha**
 10 Feb 06 **Islamic New Year**
 19 Feb 06 **Ashura**
 21 Apr 06 **Mohammad's Birthday**
 5 Oct - 24 Oct 03 **Ramadan**
 29 Oct 06 **Layla tul-Quar**
 04 Nov 06 **Eid al-Fitr**

2007

20 Jan 06 **Islamic New Year**
 29 Jan 06 **Ashura**
 31 Mar 06 **Mohammad's Birthday**
 13 Sep - 12 Oct 06 **Ramadan**
 8 Oct 06 **Layla tul-Quar**
 13 Oct 06 **Eid al-Fitr**
 18 - 21 Dec 06 **Hajj**
 20 Dec 06 **Eid al-Adha**

WHAT TO EXPECT

**Fasting/Prayer
 Celebration
 Procession**



Prayer:
 Many Islamic holidays include public displays of piety and prayer.



Celebration:
 Eid al Fitr is a three-day celebration at the close of Ramadan.



Procession:
 Some Islamic holidays include a mass procession. Ashura, includes public, self-inflicted mutilation

Clothes / Gestures

MALE DRESS

White



Has not made the hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca.

Black and White



From a country with Presidential rule (i.e. Libya or Egypt) and has made the hajj.

Red Checkered



From a country with a monarch (i.e. Saudi Arabia or Jordan) and has made the hajj.

FEMALE DRESS

Traditional Dress



Arab women often wear Western dress with a shawl or head scarf.



Western Dress

Devout or conservative women wear a hejab, a full head covering, and an abaya, a body covering made of dark colors.

Western dress is common in urban areas, but traditional dress is still prevalent in rural Iraq.

GESTURES



Right hand over heart is a sign of respect or thanks



Right hand, palm up, fingers touching, means to slow down or be patient.



Quick upward head snap with tongue click means no.

Cultural Customs

HONOR AND SHAME

Admitting "I don't know" is shameful for an Iraqi. Constructive criticism can be taken as an insult. Women will often wear head scarves as a show of respect, even if wearing Western clothing. Women are rarely without a male relative or friend for escort.



FAMILY



Family is the center of honor, loyalty, and reputation. Men are always the head of the family. No direct attention should be given to female relatives.

PERSONAL SPACE

Iraqis do not share an American concept of "personal space" in public situations, and in private meetings or conversation. It is considered offensive to step or lean away from an Iraqi.



Women are an exception to this rule. One should not stand close to, stare at, or touch women.

SOCIALIZATION AND TRUST



When conducting business, it is customary to first shake the hand of all the males present, taking care to grip neither too firmly nor too meekly. Allocate plenty of time for refreshments before attempting to engage an Iraqi in business conversation. It is important to first establish respect and trust.

Cultural History

Ancient Mesopotamia 18th - 6th Century B.C.



Babylonian Empire seen as cradle of modern civilization

The Ottoman Period 1534-1916

Iraq consisted of three semi-independent provinces.

The Turks Ottoman Empire supported Sunni governance to counter influence from Shia Safavid Iran.

Persia sponsored Shia missionaries during the 1800s. The majority of Iraq's population converted from Sunni to Shia.



The British Mandate and Monarchy 1920-1958

The British forged modern Iraq in 1921 under an appointed Sunni King.

The Kurds became a stateless ethnic group split among Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.

British and Sunni forces repressed a Shia and Kurdish revolt. Sunnis dominated Iraqi society.

The 1958 coup brought independence and republican rule.

Modern Iraq 1958-Present

Instability from 1958 to 1968 until Ba'ath Party takeover, Sunni Arabs dominate Iraq by oppressing Shia Arabs and Kurds.

Following the 1979 Shia revolution in Iran, Saddam Hussein feared a Shia uprising.

The Iran-Iraq war from 1980-1988 exacerbated religious and ethnic tensions, leading to numerous Kurdish and Shia uprisings-all were brutally repressed.

Do This

IN GENERAL

Shake hands gently in greeting and departure, but always with your right hand.

Respond to a woman's greeting only when she initiates the contact. Allow her to shake hands using only her fingertips.

Refer to the entire family when making inquiries, well wishes, or blessings.

Be patient; the Iraqi approach to time is slow and relaxed.

IN IRAQI HOMES

Try all food offered to you, even if in small portions. Feel free to ask about the cuisine or its preparation.

Appear relaxed and friendly; social interaction is critical in building trust.

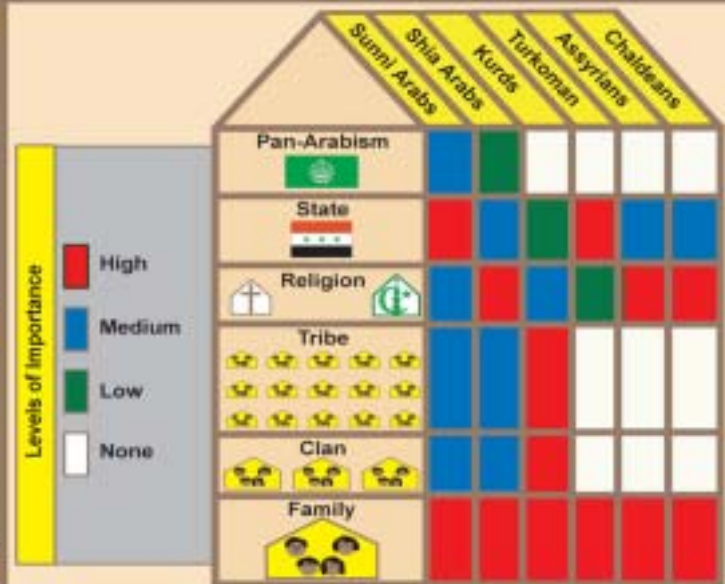
AS A GUEST

Be gracious; do not appear anxious to leave.

Offer profuse thanks to host and wish his family well.

Arrive on time for meetings, but expect casual conversation and a gradual approach to a business discussion

Social Structure



CLANS are extended families that trace their lineage to one patriarchal figure.

TRIBES usually consist of several clans, all of which claim a common ancestor. Tribes mediate conflict and distribute economic goods. Tribes cultivate values, such as loyalty, bravery and shame. These are central to Arab identity.

PAN-ARABISM emphasizes solidarity between Arabs across national borders.

Don't Do This

- ⊘ Don't use your left hand for contact with others, eating, or gestures. It is considered unclean.
- ⊘ Don't point with a finger; it is a sign of contempt. Instead, point with your entire hand.
- ⊘ Don't ask for a single opinion on an issue, as Iraqis often first reply with the answer they think you want to hear, rather than an honest response.
- ⊘ Don't slouch, lean, or appear disinterested when conversing with Iraqi men. Do not expose the soles of feet or shoes.
- ⊘ Don't back away from an Iraqi during conversation. Close personal interaction is customary and distance is considered rude.
- ⊘ Don't offer a Muslim food or drink or consume either publicly during Ramadan. Never offer a Muslim alcohol or pork.
- ⊘ Don't engage in religious discussions.
- ⊘ Don't make the "OK" or "thumbs up" signs; they are considered obscene.
- ⊘ Don't praise an Iraqi's possessions too much. He may give them to you and expect something of equal value in return

Understanding Arabic Names

	Abu Yusuf	Muhammad	Al-Tikriti	Al-Sayf
FATHER	(Parental Title) Father of Yusuf	(First Name)	(Birthplace, occupation) from Tikrit	From the Al-Sayf Family
MOTHER	Umm Yusuf	Rahil	bint Hassan ibn Ibrahim	Al-Saddaf
	(Parental Title) Mother of Yusuf	(First Name)	(family heritage) Daughter of Hassan, and Hassan, son of Ibrahim	From the Al-Saddaf Family
CHILD	Yusuf	ibn Muhammad		Al-Sayf
	(First Name)	(Family Heritage) Son of Muhammad		From the Al-Sayf Family

An Arabic name may be spelled several different ways in English.

Women do not take their husband's name. Parents add a title to their name that includes the name of their first son.

When including family heritage in names, women use "bint," meaning "daughter of," and men use "ibn" or "bin", meaning "son of."

Information provided by:
Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA)
Quality and Dissemination Branch
3300 Russell Road, Suite 250,
Quantico, VA 22134-5011

For additional information see MCIA's
CD-ROM "Cultural Intelligence For
Military Operations: Iraq"

CD-ROM dissemination:
COM: 703-784-6167 DSN: 278-6167



Culture *Continued from page 18*



Photo by Sgt. Amy Dobler

“Working with diverse cultures in their home element is more a matter of finesse, diplomacy and communication,” wrote retired Army Col. Maxie McFarland in the July issue of *Special Warfare*.

“Success demands an understanding of individual, community and societal normative patterns... cultural awareness is now necessary as part of Soldier- and leader-development.”

“Our job is to teach each Soldier how to approach the [Iraqi] citizens and gain a new friend as opposed to gaining new insurgents,” said Miguel Aguirre, an instructor with The Edge.

Iraq is a Middle Eastern country in southwestern Asia encompassing the ancient region of Mesopotamia. Sharing its border with Turkey, Iran, the Gulf of Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria, it is one of the world’s oldest centers of culture and home to the world’s second-largest proven oil reserves. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Islamic Abbasid Caliphs presided over what was then the world’s leading civilization, rich in science, art and literature.

At the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, looters took advantage of the chaos that accompanies war and pilfered much of the cultural treasures of Mesopotamian archaeology housed in the Baghdad Museum. The number and value of stolen items are disputed, but the fact remains that the Iraqi cultural heritage was damaged more by looters than any bombing could. The way Iraqis view the American troops who patrol their cities is hard to quantify. Religion and respect are highly valued in the Iraqi culture. U.S. Soldiers must work continuously for any hope of winning over the population, Montgomery explained.

“Awareness is the key. You really can’t teach it, but you can make the Soldiers aware,” he added. “They must understand that they are not [just] National Guardsmen or Reservists or whatever civilian title they had. They are Soldiers and ambassadors. They represent the United States.”

“Culture awareness training benefits deploying Soldiers because it prepares them to effectively interact and communicate with host-nation [citizens] in a way that will protect them and their units from unforeseen and possibly hostile encounters caused by a lack of cultural knowledge,” said Pete Shaver, chief of the Culture, Foreign Language Integration Center, U.S. Army Intelligence Center. “The more knowledge a deploying Soldier has of this new culture, the better he or she will perform and execute the mission.”

Members of the National Guard and Reserve agree that cultural training has given them a brief look at what to expect and how to handle different situations.

“This training teaches Soldiers the customs, the ‘dos and don’ts’ for when you approach people,” said Sgt. 1st Class Al

Dorsey, first sergeant of the 539th Military Police Detachment from Phoenix, Ariz. “It’s basically the same as here in America with people from the North, South, East or West – [there are] certain things that you just don’t do.” Dorsey and the rest of his unit attended the cultural brief in August en route to Iraq.

“This is a guideline for what to expect, but you really have to get over there and see things for yourself because things change,” said Sgt. Rhonda Robinson of the 756th Transportation Company, Lancaster, Calif., who was also preparing for deployment. “This is my third time going over there and each time has been different.”

One of the biggest misconceptions most Soldiers have about Iraqis is that they don’t speak English, when in fact they understand more than one might think, according to Aguirre. Also, many news media reports have portrayed Iraq as a war-torn, third-world country, when in fact the country has many amenities that are the same as in the United States.

“When I first found out where we were going, I was nervous and I’m still a bit nervous, but it’s getting better,” said Pfc. Rene Antonio, a member of the California National Guard. “This class is helping me because I didn’t know what to say to the Iraqis or how I should act around them, but now I do. I understand how one thing could be the difference from making a friend or making an enemy.”

Iraqis are very generous and loyal and very polite to their friends, according to information gleaned from www.myarabicstory.org. If a friend asks for a favor, it is considered very rude to say no. It is taboo to wish bad luck on someone because it might come true. The left hand is used for sanitary purposes; therefore, it is never used when eating – aside from using forks and knives, said Montgomery.

Iraqis talk a lot, talk loudly, repeat themselves often and interrupt each other constantly. Conversations are highly emotional and full of gestures. Some common Iraqi gestures are:

Eyebrows raised and head tilted back	“No”
Clicking the tongue with a <i>tsk</i> sound	“No”
Forefinger moving right-to-left repeatedly	“No”
Hand moving up and down palm facing down	“Be quiet”
Hand moving away from the body the palm facing down	“Go away!”
Reaching out while opening and closing the hand palm facing up	“Come here”
Right hand on heart after shaking hands	Show of sincerity.
Shaking the head from side to side	Lack of understanding, not necessarily disagreement.

Regardless of whether they are active-duty Army, National Guard or Reserve, Soldiers who learn about the cultures in which they are to be immersed are better prepared to succeed in their missions.



Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Krishna M. Gamble

NCOs share ideas, experiences

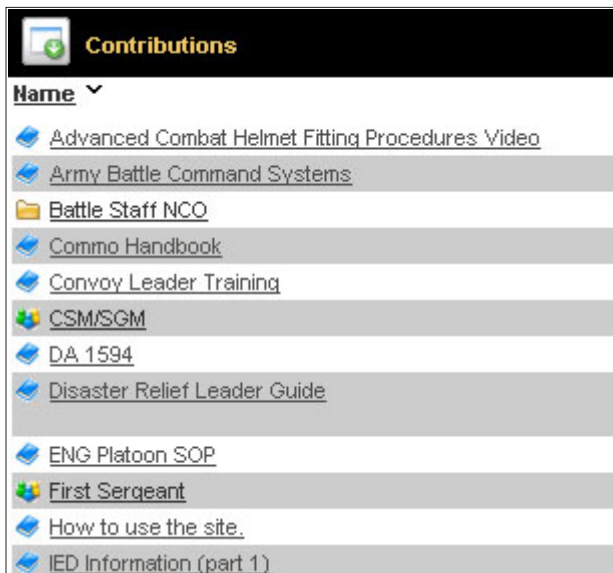
It started in 1991 as a bulletin board service for NCOs wanting to share ideas via the Internet. It has evolved into a system of professional forums, knowledge centers and supporting toolkits, it all combines to provide a global system for sharing information and experiences, problem solving, improving operational performance and support of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES).

NCO Net (<https://nconet.bcks.army.mil>) promotes and enhances collaboration, communication and knowledge-sharing among NCOs to produce agile leaders and teams, said Joe Pearson, the NCO NET site manager. "NCO Net is an online collaborative forum where NCOs can communicate with each other, sharing experiences, ideas, thoughts and questions," he said.

NCO Net is similar to the former *squad-leader.com* and current *companycommander.com* Web sites in that it's a one-stop-shop for NCOs to connect. It will soon replace NCOTeam.org, an online site created to serve as a global online community for Army NCOs and Soldiers. The site provides a professional peer ex-



Command Sgt. Maj. Dan Elder, command sergeant major of Army Materiel Command, left, gives the copyrights and usage to Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Clem, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy battalion commander, during a Sept. 12 ceremony at Fort Bliss, Texas, announcing the launch of NCO Net.



The snapshot above shows some of the knowledge objects that users have uploaded which can be downloaded by other members.

change network and also provides access to a wide range of research resources on NCO history and traditions, as well as current news topics through its expansive online library.

"NCOs can use the power of the World Wide Web [to facilitate] the rapid transfer of knowledge from the more senior people in the Army to the more junior people in the Army," said Command Sgt. Major Dan Elder, command sergeant major, Army Materiel Command, Fort Belvoir, Va.

Elder formulated the idea of online collaboration amongst NCOs while stationed at Fort Knox, Ky., when he and another Soldier connected their computers together with a modem and began posting messages to what was known as "The Old Soldiers BBS." According to Elder, hundreds of NCOs would log on daily to the site to read and respond to postings.

"It wasn't global like the Internet is; it was more regional," Elder said. "You had to call into a local number to [connect to the system], and only one [person] at a time could do it, so it was a lot different than how the Internet [operates] today."



The welcome screen for the site, above, allows users to access various features such as knowledge objects and the discussion forum.

Advances in technology provide opportunities for creating learning environments that extend the possibilities of books and human contact. In the past, Army units needed to be in close contact with each other in order to carry out a plan. In fact, some form of human contact was essential. Military leaders understand that has all changed with the advent of the long-distance communication technologies, in particular, the Internet. It is now possible for an Army to be spread over a vast distance and conduct effective operations thanks to the high-speed communications of the Internet.

“We are an Army at war,” Pearson said. “Our warfighters do not have the luxury of learning through trial and error. NCO Net will make it possible for our warfighters to collaborate, share knowledge and learn from the experiences of others.”

Discussing more efficient war-fighting lessons learned is not the only goal of NCO Net. It is also a means for Soldiers to ask questions related to their career fields, receive or give advice and seek guidance on an array of topics from retired and senior military leaders or subject matter experts. For example, if you are a new first sergeant and want advice on what to expect or how to handle certain situations, you can log onto the NCO Net and ask other first sergeants for advice and guidance.

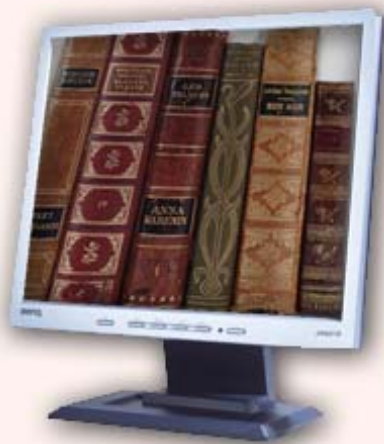
“I think the NCO Net will benefit [NCOs] because it will enable them to talk to someone who serves in the same position and can relate or have experienced some of the things an [NCO in a new position] will experience,” said 1st Sgt. Cynthia M. Walker, first sergeant of the New York Military Entrance Processing Station, Fort Hamilton, N. Y.

“Our ultimate goal is to transform the Army NCO community into a learning and teaching organization, highly skilled and able to provide superior knowledge to our warfighters,” Pearson said. “Our hope is that these shared professional experiences will help build the necessary frames of reference for intuitive decision making.

“NCO Net is a place where NCOs can gather to discuss issues concerning professional development, Soldier development, leadership, tactics, techniques and procedures, and lessons learned, as well as share the tools that we use to handle those issues. How many times have we, as leaders, had to re-invent the wheel when it preparing for classes, ammunition calculators, a statistics tracking database, and countless other files that help make our job easier?” Pearson added. “With less than 20 minutes of searching, I can find at least a template for what I need. If I can’t, I will ask the community and get multiple suggestions back within an hour. Many websites out there have the ability for you to download the tools, and many Web sites out there have the ability to discuss how you use those tools. NCO Net is one of the few places that a leader can get NCO-specific files, documents and classes, as well as the ability to modify them for the better of the NCO Corps as a whole.

The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy maintains oversight of the site, but all active-duty, Reserve, National Guard and retired Soldiers who have an AKO account can become members of NCO Net.

NCO NET 



Online Education

Getting a degree without going into a classroom

By Staff Sgt. Krishna M. Gamble

Soldiers often find it difficult to attend college classes. Breaking away from work or missing classes because of exercises and deployments can make it more difficult for Soldiers to get into the classroom. However, these days Soldiers can still take classes without ever stepping into a classroom. Thanks to technology, Soldiers can now work on their college degrees anytime, anywhere.

Distance and online education are just two examples of how advances in technology are engineering massive shifts in education that benefits Soldiers. Distance education takes place when the instructor and student are separated by space and/or time. The gap between the two are bridged through the use of audio tapes, satellite broadcasts and online technology or more traditional delivery methods, such as the postal service. Online education is virtual, Internet-based or Web-based education delivered primarily via the Internet to students at remote locations, including their homes or field sites.

These are not new ideas, however. The University of Chicago established the first major correspondence program in the United States in the late 1800s in which the teacher and students were at different locations. It was designed to provide educational opportunities for those who were not among the elite and who could not afford full-time residence at an educational institution.

More recently, audio and computer conferencing have influenced the delivery of instruction in public schools and higher education. Telecommunication networks circle the globe linking people from many nations together and the Internet has extended the classroom out over time and space.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Mikeworth, American Forces Press Service

Soldiers assigned to the Logistics Support Area, Camp Anaconda, Iraq, take advantage of a computer lab dedicated to Sgt. Keith Matthew Maupin. Maupin's parents donated 35 computers so that Soldiers can keep in touch with their loved ones and pursue their education.

“One major benefit of online courses is that they can reach people in different areas of the world who could not get to a particular campus where the course they want is being offered,” said Dr. Samar A. Barakat, associate professor at the University of Sharjah, in an article entitled *On-line Education Versus Classroom Face to Face Education*.

Soldiers deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan or other theaters of operations are walking success stories of how this technology works. In 2004, more than 46,000 Soldiers took college classes through online programs. Figures from the National Center for Education Statistics show that there were more than 2,800 distance education college degree programs in 2001 — most of those programs were online programs. Online schools offer advantages over their campus-based counterparts.



This photo appearing on the U.S. Army Education Web site highlights the fact that Soldiers can log on any time, anywhere to keep up with their college classes even in field environments.

A few of the most important ones, noted by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D., a nationally-known career expert, coach and associate professor of marketing at Stetson University, DeLand, Fla., include flexibility, availability, convenience, cost, time and accessibility.

“Courses can be taken anywhere that you have computer access. Students excel with online [programs] that have an ability to learn through visual cues and experimental exercises. Additionally, students that require more time, are language challenged or introverted do quite well too,” he said.

“It is possible to meet all requirements and fully participate in the learning experience without having to meet at one place [at] any given time,” said Thomas W. Peterman, Ph.D., Vice President for Distance Learning, Park University, Parkville, Mo. “We find that our students, most of whom are working adults, appreciate being able to participate in their class activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week – at their convenience – with no loss in academic quality.”

“I prefer online education because classes are set up to work around my schedule,” said Staff Sgt. MyKisha Jones, an information systems analyst with the 307th Signal Battalion, Camp Carroll, Korea. Jones is a junior at University of Maryland, University College, studying information systems management.

“Discipline is the number one challenge. Basically, it is up to the individual to participate and get the coursework done. The second challenge is having a complete understanding of the coursework and being sure that you are getting something out of the class,” she said.

While online education is becoming more popular, its effectiveness is still questioned according to studies conducted at East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C. Many students learn best through direct interaction with professors and other students. Distance education often prohibits this interaction,

making learning and direct involvement less likely. Many students also feel as though they are missing out on something when taking online classes.

“You would think being a single parent that online classes are convenient, but I would much rather interact with my instructors instead of waiting for e-mail responses to questions or to find out about my grades,” said Sgt. Teachneliar Busby, freshman at Hawaii Pacific University. Busby is a squad leader and information systems operator with the 516th Signal Brigade, Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

“A con for some students is the lack of personal, face-to-face contact with the instructor and classmates,” Peterman said. “Some students need this regular, direct contact to remain motivated. However, since online courses are not glorified correspondence

courses, a well-designed online program and qualified instructors can overcome this in most cases.”

Still, online education is extremely popular with working adults and those with children, according to Michael Heberling, Ph.D., president of Baker College Center for Graduate Studies, Flint, Mich. It is now possible to continue one’s education in a way that minimizes the competing demands of both work and family. This flexibility also allows Soldiers to keep studying even during field exercises and deployments.

“The Army promotes online education and provides programs, policies and directives which enable success,” said Connie S. Wardell, Ed. D., director of Individual Training Support at the Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Va.

According to articles published June 11, 2004, there were 729 degrees conferred and 122,763 course enrollments for eArmyU on-line. In 2005 to date, there are 40,800 Army Training Requirements and Resources System graduates.

The Army supports learning at all levels and through all means, Wardell added. Soldiers can take classes at anytime, no matter where they are located. The Tuition Assistance program pays 100 percent of college tuition. Soldiers have the flexibility to attend classes during duty hours, and eArmyU offers close to 147 certificate, associate, bachelor and master’s degree programs from 29 different educational institutions.

Both traditional and distance/online education have their pros and cons. The choice a Soldier makes in continuing his or her higher education is a personal one. Suffice it to say, however, Soldiers have several choices thanks to advances in Internet technology.

For more information on online education, visit your post education officer.

photo journal

Welcome to another edition of *Photo Journal*, the place where everyone has the opportunity to put their favorite photos on display. The guidelines for submitting pictures are as follows: the picture should depict NCOs in action, whether it's leading Soldiers in the field, conducting training, or just plain taking care of business. You don't have to be a professional photographer to enter. When submitting photos please include the name of person(s) in the photo, a brief description of the action to include location, and, of course, your name and unit. Photos may be submitted in either hard copy or digitally. If you plan on e-mailing a digital photo, make sure it is at least 300 dpi. Mail photos to *The NCO Journal*, Commandant, USASMA, ATTN: ATSS-SJ, Editor, 11291 SGT E Churchill St., Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002 or e-mail the electronic version to ATSS-SJ-NCOJOURNAL@bliss.army.mil.



by Senior Master Sgt. Kim M. Allain

Soldiers from Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command provide security for a civil affairs mission in Tikrit, Iraq.



by Cameras in Action

Above: Joe Nemechek's Army Chevrolet leads David Stremme's Navy Dodge down the Chicagoland Speedway front stretch during the USG Sheetrock 400 NASCAR race. They finished in the same order, with the Army coming in 15th and the Navy close behind in 16th.

Right: Staff Sgt. Chris Williams, from the 155th Brigade Combat Team, welds a shield for a gun mount on a Humvee near Al Iskandariyah, Iraq. All photos courtesy of www.army.mil.



by Kurt Gibbons III

Commentary:

Will America ever forget 9-11?

By Gary Sheffick
Army News Service

How long does it take to forget a tragedy like Sept. 11, 2001? That question entered my mind as I attended a memorial service in the Pentagon auditorium to observe the fourth anniversary of the terrorist attack there in which 184 service-members and civilian employees lost their lives.

It was a service that brought back memories and emotions that I hadn't felt in some time.

I had almost forgotten the confusion of that day and the sorrow that followed for those who didn't make it and the guilt for not being able to help them. When their portraits flashed one-by-one on the screen at the front of the auditorium, though, those feelings returned with a sting.

I remembered the terrible burns of some survivors; the coughing and lung ailments developed by some of the rescue workers who sifted through the smoking rubble.

I couldn't help but remember the memorial service a month after the attack when about 10,000 Pentagon workers and family members attended a ceremony led by President Bush on the parade field in front of the River Entrance.

I remembered the thousands cheering when President Bush pledged action against those who perpetrated the attack, and promised that America "will never forget" those who gave their lives.

And I remembered the first anniversary observance, also led by the president and attended by thousands who sat in a temporary stadium built near the site where the high-jacked airliner hit the building.

Then I looked around the Pentagon service during the fourth anniversary, and noticed that it was attended by fewer than 100 military members and civilians.

I wondered if four years was long enough for some to forget? I wondered how many who lived through that day at the Pentagon had gone on to other assignments, perhaps in Iraq or Afghanistan? I wondered how many were trying to forget the pain or were just too busy with work in the War on Terror to attend a Monday memorial service.



Photo by Sgt. Lorie Jewell

The cast of "Spirit of America" stands at attention at the conclusion of its show in Worcester, Mass., Sept. 11, 2004.

In fairness, I knew that thousands had attended the "America Supports You Freedom Walk" organized by the Pentagon on Sunday, the actual anniversary of 9-11. Hundreds attended a remembrance service in Kabul, Afghanistan. And no doubt many attended Patriot Day observances all across the nation.

For those who did attend the Pentagon service, it was an emotional experience.

Paul Brady spoke about crawling through the smoke and escaping the Navy Command Center when the plane hit. Only eight of 34 who were in the command center that morning lived, Brady said, and several of the survivors were badly burned and injured.

Brady spoke of the hate and his desire for revenge following Sept. 11. He said those feelings have now softened, with a Christian re-awakening, to prayer for those who perished – both the victims and perpetrators.

Pentagon Chaplain Col. Ralph Benson said "We are a people of hope" when speaking at the service about the enduring American spirit. He added that "When we see tragedy, we remember it and move on..."

Hopefully we will move on, but never forget those who died Sept. 11.

SGT Army Professional
Deployed around the World
Hometown, USA IIIII



Letters to the Editor

The NCO Journal

11291 SGT E Churchill Street
Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

Detroit is not a terrorist haven

I read with some interest your article in July 2005's *NCO Journal*. On the whole, it was very informative on the subject, I feel I must object to the very inflammatory and demeaning reference to Detroit, my hometown.

I am a 23-year veteran with the United States Navy, Naval Reserve, Army, Army Reserve, and the National Guards of Michigan, Indiana, and North Carolina. I have also served as an Army recruiter in Pontiac, Mich. My service has taken me to Lebanon, Grenada, the Persian Gulf, and just about every operation this nation has been involved with since 1982. I have been, and still am, serving proudly in the Armed Forces, specifically the 310th Chemical Company in Greenville, S.C.

Detroit, like every metropolitan city, has various neighborhoods that are home to U.S. citizens of diverse origins. Being from Hazel Park, I immediately understood the Detroit/Khilafah connotation. And to this, I most fervently object. The ethnic background doesn't determine a person's character or patriotism. I have and will continue to abide by my enlistment oath, as has my father, grandfather and great grandfather before me. My oldest son is also planning on continuing my family's service. My younger brother is also serving. My cousins have served, as well. All of us have served our respective services with honor. To insinuate that just because we are from Detroit diminishes our service.

Farfetched? Yes.

In Detroit and its suburbs are a variety of people. Is West Bloomfield going to become part of Israel? No. Hamtramck part of Poland? No. Little Italy? No.

Detroit does hold the distinction of having the largest ethnic Arab population outside the Middle East; that is true. Does Islamic law apply? No. If anything, the example of persons from Arab and Jewish descent living in harmony stands as a beacon for how those in the Middle East should live.

I didn't appreciate being all but accused of being a terrorist in the subheadline and opening paragraph because of being both one-half Arabic and from Detroit. And, I'm very sure, neither did anyone else. And, for the record, I am a Catholic, not a Muslim.

Otherwise, your article was very applicable to the needs of the NCO Corps.

Staff Sgt. Gabriel Nicholas Lewis, III
3/310th CM Co.
Greenville, S.C.

Clarifying an inaccuracy

First of all, thank you for the excellent article highlighting the efforts of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) to educate motorcycle riders in this Fort Campbell (Ky.) based unit.

However, the article contained an inaccuracy that could lead readers to think that the unit purchased motorcycles to support the course. This is incorrect. All of the motorcycles used in the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic Riders Course are provided by the contractor in accordance with the statement of work. As a result, none of the bikes used in this safety program are owned, maintained or stored by the 160th SOAR.

I hope that you will have an opportunity to correct the record with your readers in a future edition.

Walter Sokalski Jr.
Deputy Public Affairs Officer
U.S. Army Special Operations Command
Fort Bragg, N.C.

Editor's note: We have received several comments regarding this article, particularly our use of the teaser photo on the inside cover in the index. We realize that this photo has been identified as many different things: from an attempted suicide, to a blasting cap injury to a motorcycle accident photo. In any case, the use of the photo was only that of a lead-in to get our readers interested in reading this timely article on motorcycle safety and statistics. Apparently, the photo worked as we have heard from many of our readers. Even though some took exception to the photo, we received many positive comments on the article's content.

True propaganda

In the July 2005 issue of the *NCO Journal*, on page 12, there is a factual error regarding “Baghdad Betty.” The article states that in 1991, Baghdad Betty told Soldiers that “Bart Simpson was sleeping with their wives.” This is an urban myth. It traces its roots to a joke perpetrated by Johnny Carson and the Tonight Show writers. Read about it here: <http://www.snopes.com/radiotv/radio/baghdad.htm>. Johnny Carson eventually owned up to the joke and that should have ended it, but it had already hit the wire services and major media outlets and the Pandora’s Box couldn’t be closed.

Capt. Lee Eines
10th Multifunctional Aviation Brigade
Fort Drum, N.Y.

What’s in a name?

My letter is in rebuttal to the article title “Soldier” on page 30 of your [July 2005] *NCO Journal*. I think it’s sad to see such exaggerated comments made by such military professionals. For one, it doesn’t make any sense how you label NCOs as poor leaders for not using the word “Soldier” when addressing members of the junior enlisted ranks. At a time when our nation is at war and is encountering problems at all levels of combat, from tactical to strategic, it seems to be a miniscule issue to debate. As NCOs, our primary job is to prepare our soldiers for war and sometimes that job requires the use of language that is even worse than calling a Soldier “Joe.”

To be a Soldier is to be a warrior, and we are warriors who are actively engaged in fierce combat with a smart and determined enemy. To live this sort of life brings out aggressive, non-PC, abrasive lifestyles, and to expect true warriors to not use abrasive language with their subordinates is an unreal expectation. Should we expect our Soldiers to be able to kill the enemy by bayonet or bare hands, if necessary? If you answered “yes,” should we expect these same Soldiers to use the politeness of a doctor or businessman? I expect the answer to be no because this is not a perfect world and a Soldier cannot be both a hardened warrior and a politically correct saint.

As a squad leader, I have seen many wonderful traits of the “Soldier” you put on a pedestal in your article. Your “Soldier” is the all-American, high-speed, motivated volunteer who wants to do whatever is required to fulfill his or her obligation to the United States. My “Soldier” can vary from young, motivated men who volunteer with a true desire to serve their country to those who ran out of options in life and volunteered in the Army only because they burned every other bridge. My “Soldier” is a person of great moral fortitude, yet may also be a habitual drug user, lazy, a debtor, a poor husband or father. As I am sure you know, not every member of the United States Army deserves respect for signing the dotted line at their local recruiter station. We have criminals and slouches mixed in our ranks to the left and right of our true “Soldiers”; those that truly espouse the Army Values we talk about so often.

In conclusion, when I or my Soldiers are called “Grunts,” each one of us holds our head up a little higher at that endearing

term. My Soldiers are proud to be my “Joes” and my “Cherries,” because they know I care about them. So the next time you think that GIs are offended by these terms, you should do better research and not generalize NCOs as poor leaders. I believe that it’s a good thing your not at the top of my NCO support channel, because it doesn’t sound like I would get the support I need from you. Let’s worry about our Soldiers’ equipment failing on them or getting them better body armor and other gear they need. Perhaps the next time you feel that you should write an article to the NCOs in our Army, maybe write one that gives us support and builds morale and esprit de corps, instead of bashing us. You should show the NCOs a little more respect than that. I think we’ve earned it.

Staff Sgt. Derek Lee Doughty
Clarksville, Tenn.

Need more info on Web site

Since your magazine depends on the contributions of NCOs it would be nice if the page had a link Soldiers could click on to find out how to submit articles, article guidelines, photo contribution information and a direct link to the Editor. Maybe this link exists on other *Journal* online pages, but I think it would be good to place the link on this page as well.

Julia Johnston
Fort Bliss, Texas

Mrs. Johnston,

Thank you so much for your comment. Just as we depend on submissions from the field, we also depend on feedback from our readers. The *NCO Journal* staff is assigned to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA); therefore, the Academy hosts the *NCO Journal* on the Academy’s Web site. On Nov. 1, the new USASMA Web site will go online. The *NCO Journal* will have a comprehensive presence on the site and will feature several frequently asked questions regarding the magazine, including writers’ and photographers’ guidelines, subscription information and links to every back issue of the *NCO Journal*. To check out the new *NCO Journal* Web site, go to <https://bliss.army.mil/usasma/journal/>.

A badge for drivers?

Is there a way this could happen? With all this talk about badges it got me thinking about my MOS. I am an 88M (motor transport operator), and have been one for 12 years now and drove for two tours of duty in Bosnia. The Airborne, Air Assault, Diver, Rigger and Pathfinder [qualified Soldiers] all have a badge that can be worn on the BDUs and ACUs.

I think the Army should think of a badge for us drivers and mechanics. After all we supply the lines with what the ground troops need and the mechanics fix it if it’s down for repairs. I feel very strongly about this issue and hope this can happen. I’d like to walk on post and have a Soldier say, “Hey you’re a driver.”

Sgt. Shawn Pierce
Devens RFTA, MA

Roll call

o f t h e f a l l e n

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Sgt. Howard P. Allen, 31, Mesa, Ariz., Sept., 26, 2005 • Staff Sgt. William A. Allers III, 28, Leitchfield, Ky., Sept. 20, 2005 • Spc. Jason E. Ames, 21, Cerulean, Ky., Aug. 31, 2005 • Sgt. 1st Class Victor A. Anderson, 39, Ellaville, Ga., July 30, 2005 • Sgt. Kurtis D. Arcala, 22, Palmer, Alaska, Sept. 11, 2005 • Pfc. Elden D. Arcand, 22, White Bear Lake, Minn., Aug. 21, 2005 • Sgt. Travis M. Arndt, 23, Bozeman, Mont., Sept. 21, 2005 • Staff Sgt. Daniel L. Arnold, 27, Montrose, Pa., Sept. 28, 2005 • Pfc. Roberto C. Baez, 19, Tampa, Fla., Oct. 3, 2005 • Staff Sgt. Jason A. Benford, 30, Toledo, Ohio, Sept. 27, 2005 • Sgt. 1st Class Michael A. Benson, 40, Winona, Minn., Aug. 10, 2005 • Sgt. Sean B. Berry, 26, Mansfield, Texas, Oct. 3, 2005 • Sgt. Matthew C. Bohling, 22, Eagle River, Alaska, Sept. 5, 2005 • Sgt. Nathan K. Bouchard, 24, Wildomar, Calif., Aug. 18, 2005 • Spc. Hobby F. Bradfield Jr., 22, The Woodlands, Texas, July 9, 2005 • Pfc. Oliver J. 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McGill, 25, Gravette, Ark., July 19, 2005 • Spc. Scott P. McLaughlin, 29, Hardwick, Vt., Sept. 22, 2005 • Staff Sgt. James D. McNaughton, 27, Middle Village, N.Y., Aug. 2, 2005 • Spc. Edward L. Meyers, 21, St. Joseph, Mo., July 27, 2005 • Capt. Lowell T. Miller II, 35, Flint, Mich., Aug. 31, 2005 • Staff Sgt. Jason W. Montefering, 27, Parkston, S.D., July 24, 2005 • Sgt. Milton M. Monzon Jr., Los Angeles, Calif., July 24, 2005 • Sgt. Steve Morin Jr., 34, Arlington, Texas, Sept. 28, 2005 • Staff Sgt. Brian L. Morris, 38, Centerville, Mich., Aug. 21, 2005 • Sgt. 1st Class Lawrence E. Morrison, 45, Yakima, Wash., Sept. 19, 2005 • Staff Sgt. Regilio E. Nelom, 45, Queens, N.Y., Sept. 17, 2005 • Sgt. Paul C. Neubauer, 40, Oceanside, Calif., Sept. 23, 2005 • Spc. Joseph C. Nurre, 22, Wilton, Calif., Aug. 21, 2005 • Staff Sgt. Ryan S. Ostrom, 25, Liberty, Pa., Aug. 9, 2005 • Sgt. Larry W. Pankey Jr., 34, Morrison, Colo., Oct. 3, 2005 • Sgt. 1st Class Lonnie J. 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Operation Enduring Freedom

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(Editor's note: This list is a continuation of previous lists printed in the October 2003, January 2004, April 2004, July 2004, October 2004, January 2005 and April 2005 issues. The names that appear in this Honor Roll are those that have been released since July 10, 2005 and are current as of October 6, 2005.)

*You Are Not
Forgotten*



“The Warrior Ethos is a crucial acknowledgement of longstanding Army values, an affirmation of the qualities that make a Soldier great. I didn’t just put it out there because we needed something on the poster. There is a lot of power in this, and each of us must embrace and understand it. The Warrior Ethos is not only about being a good Soldier, but a good spouse, parent, friend, and citizen.”

— Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker,
AUSA speech at the Washington Convention Center
October 25, 2004



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt Kim M. Allain

Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga., along with members of the Iraqi Army, move in at dawn to conduct house sweeps in an attempt to locate insurgents or their supporters during Operation Moon River outside of Samarra, Iraq.

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