



## Official Provides Tax Tips for Troops

By Lisa Danie



WASHINGTON, Feb. 3, 2012 - As service members begin preparing for the annual tax season, they may want to consider a new savings plan designed for young people, a Defense Department tax official said today.

Service members and their dependents who earn less income today than they expect to earn in the future, such as those in junior ranks who look forward to getting promoted to higher grades, should consider investing in the Thrift Savings Plan's new Roth option, said Army Lt. Col. Evan Stone, director of the Armed Forces Tax Council.

"The Roth TSP is a good option for service members who are paying less tax now than they expect to pay later," Stone said during an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service.

The traditional Thrift Savings Plan defers taxes on earned income until the money is withdrawn, Stone explained. The Roth option allows a member to contribute after-tax dollars that grow taxfree and are not taxed upon withdrawal, he said.

Both plans allow a maximum annual contribution of \$17,000, he said, up from \$16,500 last year.

There are few other changes that apply to service members and their dependents this tax season, Stone said. A new calculation for Imminent Danger Pay does not change service members' eligibility for income tax exclusions. The pay was changed from a flat \$225 per month, to an amount prorated per day.

Stone said there has been no change to federal income tax brackets in the past two years. They remain at 10, 15, 25, 28, 33 and 35 percent of taxable income, he said.

Still, Stone said, many people don't realize that income is taxed on a progressive scale, so as a person's income increases and they move into a higher tax bracket, only the new proportion of pay is taxed at the higher rate, not all of their income.

While few people enjoy writing a check to Uncle Sam, Stone also noted that the military is a good employer come tax time because military allowances, such as those for housing and meals, are not taxable.

"Military members have a tax advantage by

having a chunk of their regular pay as tax-exempt income," he said.

Stone said he wants to remind service members that they and their dependents can get free tax preparation by IRS-trained volunteers at almost every military installation in the world.

"The military has an excellent program for tax preparation worldwide," he said. Deployed service members, he added, do not have to sign the tax forms if their spouse has power of attorney privileges.

*Military OneSource Tax Program has launched the H&R Block at Home free electronic filing tax service. File your Federal and State taxes online for free! Also, Military OneSource offers free tax-related phone consultations seven days-a-week, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., at 1-800-730-3802.*

## DEADLINE



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## Tax Extensions for Military Personnel



In recognition of their service, military personnel are given more flexible rules regarding income tax filing and payment. If you are a member of the U.S. military, the IRS will allow you to postpone the time for taking care of certain tax matters.

There are several things you should know about tax extensions.

**Tax Extensions for Overseas Deployment:** If you are serving overseas during tax filing season, you are automatically granted a 2-month tax extension — with no paperwork required and no tax payments or penalties assessed. If you need more than two months to file your return, you can e-file IRS Form 4868 online using the FileLater system and get an income tax extension until October.

This tax extension is designed for personnel serving in non-combat areas. If you are deployed in a combat zone, or you move to a combat zone (from a non-combat area) while overseas, see the section below.

**Tax Extensions for Combat Zone Service:** If you are currently serving in the U.S. military or you have recently served in a combat zone, you have additional options for tax extensions. You are allowed a tax extension that is equivalent to the following:

- The amount of time you serve in a combat zone before taxes are due.
- Any time you spent continually hospitalized due to injuries sustained in a combat zone (up to 5 years).
- 180 days in addition to the two time periods listed above.

This extension includes the time for tax preparation you would have had if you weren't serving overseas. For example, if you deployed on March 1, you would earn a 226-day tax extension (180 days for the automatic extension, plus the 46 days between March 1 and April 15).

During the tax extension period, no penalties or interest will be assessed on your taxes. This extension applies to any and all taxes due — whether from income, investments, capital gains, or other sources.

It's important to remember that a military tax extension applies only to your time served directly in a combat zone. If you are initially deployed to a non-combat area and then moved to a combat zone, your tax extension will only be calculated from the date you arrive in the combat zone.

**Tax Deadlines That Can Be Extended:** The military deadline extension provision applies to a variety of IRS procedures, including the following actions:

- Filing any return of income tax, estate tax, gift tax, employment tax, or excise tax
- Paying any income tax, estate tax, gift tax, em-

ployment tax, or excise tax

- Filing a petition with the Tax Court for redetermination of a deficiency, or for review of a Tax Court decision

- Filing a claim for credit or refund of any tax

- Bringing suit for any claim for credit or refund

- Making a qualified retirement contribution to an IRA

- Allowing a credit or refund of any tax by the IRS

- Assessment of any tax by the IRS

- Giving or making any notice or demand by the IRS for the payment of any tax, or for any liability for any tax

- Collection by the IRS of any tax due

- Bringing suit by the United States for any tax due

If the IRS takes any of the above actions covered by the military provision, or sends you a notice of examination before learning that you qualify for a tax extension, contact your legal assistance office. You will not be charged any penalties or interest for failure to file a return or pay taxes during your extension period. For more information regarding military personnel, see IRS Publication 3 (Armed Forces' Guide).

**FileLater supports our troops!** Beginning in tax year 2009, any military member with an active .mil email address can file a tax extension for free with the FileLater system. Start your extension now!

## International

### Army IDs remains of last missing soldier in Iraq

AP News Source



BAGHDAD, Iraq, Feb 26, 2012, --The U.S. military announced Sunday that it has recovered the remains of the last American service member who was unaccounted for in Iraq, an Army interpreter seized by gunmen after sneaking off base to visit his Iraqi wife in Baghdad during the height of the insurgency.

The remains of Staff Sgt. Ahmed al-Taie, who was 41 when militiamen seized him on Oct. 23, 2006, were positively identified at the military's mortuary in Dover, Del., the Army said in a statement released Sunday. Army officials said they had no further details about the circumstances surrounding his death or the discovery of his remains.

Al-Taie's brother, Hathal Al-Taie, told The Associated Press the military officer who visited the family's home to inform them about the remains said they are still in Dover, but that he didn't know the circumstances surrounding his brother's death.

"We have no information right now, not even how the body looks like or when they're going to release him," Hathal Al-Taie said by phone from Ann Arbor,



Mich., where the family settled after leaving Iraq for the U.S. when his brother was still a teenager.

Their uncle, Entifadh Qanbar, said he was told by the Army major who informed the family in Ann Arbor that the remains were received at Dover on Feb. 22.

"I asked if it was an accident or if he was killed, and he said they didn't know, that they are investigating," Qanbar said by phone from Beirut, where he lives. "He said he had the same questions that I have."

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad did not respond to a request for comment late Sunday.

Family members say that like many Iraqi exiles, Ahmed al-Taie was eager to help his native land rebuild after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion and ouster of Saddam Hussein.

He met his wife during a trip to Iraq shortly after Saddam fell, while he was still a civilian, and in December 2004 he joined an Army reserve program for native speakers of Arabic and other strategic languages. He was deployed to Iraq in November 2005 and was assigned to a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghdad until he was kidnapped the following year.

At the time he was seized, kidnappings for ransom or political motives, mostly of Iraqis but also many foreigners, were common. The February 2006 bombing of a Shiite mosque by Sunni insurgents caused retaliatory bloodshed to spiral, and death squads roamed the streets.

Al-Taie's in-laws say he often met secretly with his wife at her family's home despite warnings that he was in danger of being kidnapped.

It was during one of those visits that al-Taie disappeared. Masked gunmen hiding in an abandoned Saddam-era army building seized him as he went to find his wife at her uncle's house, less than two blocks away in the

"A neighbor saw the gunmen and went to my family and informed them. My parents, brothers and sisters all came at once and pleaded with them to let him go," al-Taie's sister-in-law Shaimaa Abdul-Sattar, who witnessed the abduction, told the AP during an interview in 2010 at her Baghdad apartment.

Al-Taie remained calm as he was led into a waiting car and whisked away.

As an American soldier and a Sunni Muslim, al-Taie faced a double risk when he left the protection of his base inside the Green Zone, a well-guarded area that houses the U.S. Embassy, Iraqi government offices and the parliament.



**Staff Sgt. Ahmed Kousay al-Taie was an Army interpreter born in Iraq who lived in Ann Arbor, Mich.**

American commanders immediately launched a massive manhunt, locking down Karradah and Sadr City, a Shiite enclave in eastern Baghdad.

Within days, the military arrested four of the kidnapers. But by then, al-Taie had already been handed off to another group and transported to the Shiite heartland of southern Iraq, according to people familiar with the case.

About a week after his abduction, a family member received a ransom demand, the U.S. military previously told the AP.

The relative then met with members of the group behind the kidnapping. They showed him a grainy video on a handheld device of a man they claimed was al-Taie but he demanded solid evidence that al-Taie, who was 41 at the time, was alive and well.

Qanbar, al-Taie's uncle, denied during a previous interview that any ransom demand had been made, but he described for the AP a web of negotiations with a number of intermediaries as he continued to pursue leads through the years.

Al-Taie was last seen four months after his abduction in a video posted on the Internet by a Shiite militant faction called Ahl al-Bayt Brigades.

Al-Taie was the last American service member unaccounted for, but several civilians, including Americans who were participating in the efforts to rebuild Iraq, are still missing.

## Koran Burning in Afghanistan Prompts 3 Parallel Inquiries

By Alissa J. Rubin and Graham Bowley



KABUL, Afghanistan, Feb. 29, 2012, -- Three major investigations were under way on Wednesday into the Koran burning at Bagram Air Base by the American military last week, the event that plunged Afghanistan into days of deadly protests claiming as many as 30 Afghan lives and coinciding with the shooting deaths of four American soldiers.

Two of those American deaths, in the Afghan Interior Ministry on Saturday, prompted Gen. John R. Allen, the NATO commander in Afghanistan, to immediately withdraw hundreds of military advisers and trainers from government ministries in Kabul.

Military vehicles were back on the streets of Kabul again on Wednesday, and NATO had begun to prepare procedures to send the trainers and advisers back into the ministries, said Brig. Gen. Lewis Boone, the NATO spokesman, but he could not say whether any had begun to work again.

"We are working with the Afghan government to put in place procedures that would allow advisers to return to their workplaces," General Boone said. "General Allen will approve these procedures." General Boone did not say what those procedures were.



**Afghan protesters burn a picture of U.S. President Barack Obama during a protest in Khost province February 24, 2012. Twelve people were killed on Friday in the bloodiest day yet in protests that have raged across Afghanistan over the desecration of copies of the Muslim holy book at a NATO military base with riot police and soldiers on high alert braced for more violence. (Photo: Reuters/Anwarullah)**

In a tense atmosphere in Afghanistan, the investigations signal the seriousness of the incident for both the Afghans and the Americans and an understanding of the need to offer a full explanation and a reckoning for the perpetrators.

After the protests, Afghanistan has been quiet in the past few days, but the findings of the reports are keenly awaited by Afghans and are likely to prove politically delicate and to be a test of public opinion.

One investigation is by Americans, one is by Afghans and one is a joint Afghan-American inquiry. The formal American military investigation is the only one that can lead to punishment, while the other two will include recommendations but do not carry formal legal weight.

The formal legal inquiry, opened by General Allen on Feb. 21, is intended to understand the events that led to soldiers throwing Korans and other Muslim religious texts into a burn pit at the military base more than a week ago.

The investigation, known as an AR15-6, the number in the Army regulatory code, is a first step in a process that could lead ultimately to criminal legal action or lesser administrative punishment.

The formal investigation ordered by General Allen involves initial fact finding by a senior military officer, an American Army brigadier general, who was not involved in the incident.

The inquiry will conclude with a final report, which could comprise a recommendation for further legal action, including a more formal process that could lead to court-martial. The final report is due to be handed to General Allen in the second half of March. Any legal action will be pursued under United States laws and regulations, not Afghan laws, a NATO legal official

who asked for anonymity because the investigation was continuing said Wednesday.

The brigadier general in charge of the investigation has been at the Detention Facility in Parwan and the Bagram Air Base since Feb. 22, interviewing the people involved and inspecting the evidence, and was in the process of returning to the capital, Kabul.

The formal investigation overlaps with a joint inquiry that also includes three senior Afghan security officials from the Afghan Army, the National Directorate of Security and the Interior Ministry, who have been at Parwan and Bagram with the American brigadier general.

This joint inquiry will lead to a joint report that will be passed to General Allen for review, and that could then be released publicly as early as the next three or four days.

It is much more preliminary and its recommendations will not be binding, but it is likely to include much of the material in the formal investigation, and so could provide a snapshot of the issues involved.

Similar investigations were undertaken in the past when the American military defamed the Koran. There have been at least two other serious instances, and at least one led to the punishment of military personnel. One group of incidents occurred at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and the other in Iraq, when at least one soldier used a Koran for target practice.

At Guantánamo Bay, there were accusations — later deemed untrue by the military — that soldiers had flushed a Koran down the toilet. The final military investigation concluded, however, that there had been five instances of the mishandling of the Koran by guards and an interrogator over the course of a number of years, and two soldiers were punished.

General Allen can choose to act on the recommendations of the AR15-6 investigation, ignore them or combine them with other steps, a military officer said in a background briefing. Among the available punishments are everything from demotions and discharge from the military to imprisonment.

“General Allen takes this process extremely seriously,” said an legal official with the NATO-led coalition. “He can accept the recommendations, and he can make his own recommendations.”

While one possible result of the investigation is a court-martial, and even imprisonment, officials say that would be an extreme outcome. There are many more minor forms of punishment — yet even those far lighter penalties would be taken seriously by people in the military chain of command.

More than 30 Afghans have died in the violence that followed the Koran burning, and there have been at least three assaults on American military personnel since thousands of Afghans took to the streets to protest.

The assaults on Americans took place in the Khog-



yani district of Nangarhar Province when a man in an Afghan Army uniform shot and killed two American soldiers; in Kunduz Province, where a grenade thrown by protesters near a base wounded at least six American service members; and in Kabul where two American military officers were shot in the head by an Afghan assailant who entered a secure area of the Interior Ministry where the two were working.

The third, purely Afghan investigation is by a task force that includes members of Afghanistan's Ulema Council and some Parliament members. The Ulema is the pre-eminent religious authority in the country and is made up of scholarly mullahs.

In violence around the country on Wednesday, a suicide bomber drove a vehicle into a convoy of a NATO provincial reconstruction team in Lashkar Gah in Helmand Province in the south, wounding at least six people, while a car bomb outside a bank in Takhar Province in northern Afghanistan wounded 12 people, government and police officials said.

Separately, an explosion in the Nawa district of Helmand Province on Monday night in the home of a man suspected of being associated with the Taliban killed the man's wife and six children, a police official confirmed Wednesday. The official said investigators were trying to determine whether the home was used for manufacturing bombs.

## National

### Obama Announces Program to Hire Vets as First Responders

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.



ARLINGTON, Va., Feb. 3, 2012 -- President Barack Obama today continued his commitment to improving employment among veterans by introducing an initiative to hire

them as the country's first responders.

President Barack Obama, flanked by firefighters, national park employees and police men and women, talks about his new Veteran Job Corps initiative to replenish the nation's first responders at Fire Station #5 in Arlington, Va., Feb 3, 2012. Obama chose Fire Station #5 because its firefighters were among the first responders to first arrive at the Pentagon on following the Sept. 11 attacks. DOD photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

"In my State of the Union address, I proposed a new initiative called the Veterans Jobs Corps to put veterans back to work protecting and rebuilding America," he said. "And today, we're laying out the details of this proposal."

Speaking at a fire station here to veterans, firefighters, police officers and national park employees, Obama shared the venue's significance before his remarks. "This is a fire station that holds some special significance for our country," he explained. "On September 11th, the firefighters of this house were among the first

to respond to the attack on the Pentagon.

"You guys answered this nation's call during its hour of need," Obama added. "And in the years that followed, as Americans went to war, some of you answered that call, as well."

The president encouraged the hiring of veterans to replenish the ranks of the nation's first responders.

"First, we want to help communities hire more veterans as cops and firefighters," he said. "Over the past few years, tight budgets have forced a lot of states, a lot of local communities, to lay off a lot of first responders."

The country already has made progress in veterans' employment, Obama said.

"Already, we've helped 600,000 veterans and their family members go back to school on the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill," he said. "We've hired over 120,000 veterans to serve in the federal government [and] we've made it easier for veterans to access all sorts of employment services."

When he first became president, Obama said, one of his first actions was to ensure state and local governments received assistance through the Recovery Act to avoid laying off first responders.

"Thousands of firefighter jobs were saved because of the actions we took," he noted. "But budgets are still tight, and that's a problem we need to fix. Jobs that protect our families and our communities shouldn't be the first on the chopping block. They should be one of our highest priorities as a nation."



President Barack Obama, flanked by firefighters, national park employees and police men and women, talks about his new Veteran Job Corps initiative to replenish the nation's first responders at Fire Station #5 in Arlington, Va., Feb 3, 2012. Obama chose Fire Station #5 because its firefighters were among the first responders to first arrive at the Pentagon on following the Sept. 11 attacks. (DOD photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.)

Obama emphasized he wants to restore local communities and national parks, noting Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's presence. The Department of the Interior manages and sustains the country's lands, water, wildlife, and energy resources, among its other responsibilities.

"He needs some help," Obama said of Salazar. "And our veterans are highly qualified to help him."

They've already risked their lives defending America. They should have the opportunity to rebuild America. We've got roads and bridges in and around our national parks in need of repair. Let's fix them."

Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said in a conference call with reporters yesterday that the new three-part Veterans Job Corps initiative "will ensure our veterans don't have to fight for jobs once they come home."

Shinseki called on employers to "enlist veterans in the work of rebuilding our nation." The nation owes those who volunteered to serve in uniform after 9/11 "a debt of gratitude," Shinseki said, "and we must ensure that veterans who come home from Afghanistan and Iraq get the opportunities they deserve."

Obama lauded veterans for their resolve and "unparalleled skills and experience."

## Department Opens More Military Positions for women

From DOD



WASHINGTON, Feb. 5, 2012--The Defense Department announced today changes to its assignment policy which will result in 14,325 additional positions being opened to women.

"Women are contributing in unprecedented ways to the military's mission. Through their courage, sacrifice, patriotism and great skill, women have proven their ability to serve in an expanding number of roles on and off the battlefield," Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said. "We will continue to open as many positions as possible to women so that anyone qualified to serve can have the opportunity to do so."

In a report required by the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act, the department notified Congress today it intends to make two changes to rules in place since 1994 governing the service of female members of the armed forces: first, occupations will no longer be closed to women solely because the positions are required to be co-located with ground combat units; and second, a sizable number of positions will be opened to women at the battalion level in select direct ground combat units in specific occupations. The services also will continuously assess their experience with these changes to help determine future changes to the 1994 rules.

"The services will continue to review positions and requirements to determine what additional positions may be opened, ensuring the mission is met with the best qualified and most capable, regardless of gender," Panetta said.

The 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule articulated five basic elements informing decisions on the service of women in the

military: direct ground combat; berthing and privacy; co-location; long range reconnaissance and special operations forces; and physically demanding tasks.

The 1994 DoD policy allowed women to be restricted from some occupational specialties if those specialties were physically co-located with direct ground combat units. Because the modern-day battlefield is non-linear and fluid, with no clearly defined front line or safer rear area, combat support operations are dispersed throughout the battlespace. Removal of the co-location exclusion will result in 13,139 Army positions being opened to women, in specialties such as tank mechanic and field artillery radar operator. tion, and inform future policy decisions.

Regarding other policy restrictions, the department recognizes there are practical barriers that require time to resolve to ensure the services maximize the safety and privacy of all service members while maintaining military readiness. Building upon analysis and experience, the services will develop gender-neutral physical standards for use by all members.

"Gender-neutral physical standards ensure all members can meet the physical demands of the duties they are assigned," acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jo Ann Rooney said, "ultimately contributing to higher states of readiness through an increased understanding of the demands we place upon our members and by preventing injuries."

Panetta directed the services to update him in six months on assignment policy implementation and the progress made developing gender-neutral physical standards.

As required by law, these changes to policy will take effect after 30 days of continuous session of Congress, which is expected to occur later this spring.

View report at [http://www.defense.gov/news/WISR\\_Report\\_to\\_Congress](http://www.defense.gov/news/WISR_Report_to_Congress).

## Officials: Women Can Suffer Same Deployment Ills as Men

By Terri Moon Cronk, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Feb. 7, 2012 – It once was thought that servicewomen neither were exposed to the same combat situations as men nor developed the same psychological injuries. But officials now recognize otherwise.

"With the type of combat we're in now, ... it's probably the only place where men and women really are equal," therapist Jeanine Aversa says in "The Long Road Home," this month's installment of the Pentagon Channel series "Recon."

The segment made its debut on the Pentagon Channel yesterday and will run through February. Officials estimate that the percentage of women in the

military has doubled in the past 30 years. But that increase, the “Recon” segment noted, has come with a rise in problems such as homelessness, drug addiction and post-traumatic stress disorder among female veterans.

The Defense and Veterans Affairs departments work together to address service members’ physical, mental and emotional injuries, including those of women, so officials say it’s now easier for female veterans to ask for help.

Kate McGraw, acting deputy director for the psychological health, clinical standards of care at the Defense Centers for Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., said a “huge influx” of congressional funding and Defense Department support on the issues facing female veterans have helped address psychological health and traumatic brain injury.

“Because there are more people deploying and the frequency has increased over time,” McGraw said, “we’re also seeing an increase in support for the effects of deployment.”

Focus groups, growing numbers of support groups and a mental health anti-stigma campaign are part of the DOD and VA support for female veterans, she said.

Battling the stigma of seeking mental health counseling also has remained a concern among military leaders, McGraw noted. Some service members don’t seek help, she explained, because they believe doing so could hurt their careers.

“The fears don’t necessarily have a basis,” she said. “So this is an attempt to try to de-stigmatize those fears.”

Peculiar to women is an apparent higher rate of “co-occurrence” of PTSD and depression when compared with men after returning from deployment, McGraw said. And other behaviors also can play a part in women’s lives, she said.

“Women tend to have a higher incidence of binge drinking ... and a higher incidence of eating disorder behavior ... as compared to males,” McGraw said, citing recent literature on studies conducted during the past five years.

Women made up only seven-tenths of 1 percent of the military when now-retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught entered service in 1957. Although her active-duty experience was nothing like what today’s women service members have undergone in Iraq and in Afghanistan, she said, she emphasized that many more doors are open to women in the military now than before.

“But that progress has come with a price,” she said.

Veteran Jen Crane knows about that price. She began to have panic attacks while searching for work after she left the military. She couldn’t continue her military job as a paralegal in the civilian sector, so she took a bartending job. There, she was introduced

to cocaine. She said it brought her anxiety down and made her social.

Eventually, however, Crane’s penchant for drugs nearly cost her everything.

“Because I was using, [I was told to] get help. I was a soldier, a warrior. I can handle anything,” she said she believed. “I felt like a monster.”

Crane turned to prostitution to support her drug habit, and became homeless and broke. As her situation spiraled downward, she decided to take her life.

“I was going to do it with drugs, because it was going to be slow and painful. That’s what I felt like I deserved,” she said. But before she could act on her plan, police arrested her for drug possession.

Crane went to court, and began receiving counseling from Aversa. With support from her therapist, the courts and her family, today she is married, has a child and is the national spokeswoman for a nonprofit organization, traveling around the country to tell her story.

Experiences like Crane’s are helping to change the care female veterans receive. “We’re undergoing a culture change within the Department of Veterans Affairs,” Patricia Hayes, the VA’s chief consultant on women’s health, told “Recon.”

VA estimates that 6,500 female veterans are homeless and live on the nation’s streets -- double the number from 10 years ago. VA also reported that one in five women veterans reported VA estimates that 6,500 female veterans are homeless and live on the nation’s streets -- double the number from 10 years ago. VA also reported that one in five women veterans reported military sexual trauma during their military service, and the number of women with PTSD is increasing.

The wartime roles for servicewomen have changed because of their exposure to combat today,” Hayes said. Women were close to bombings in Vietnam, but not like in Iraq and Afghanistan, she said, which have involved carrying an M-16 rifle and being alert for roadside bombs.

Women need time to adjust after returning home, Hayes said.

“They need time to work through [what] they’ve been exposed to,” she added. “A lot of women say they’re thrust right back into family life. They tell us, ‘The laundry is piled up.’”

McGraw outlined signs that someone is struggling with readjustment issues. She cited symptoms such as the inability to get a good quality sleep, nightmares, or the feeling of reliving events from a deployment when awake, disturbing dreams about deployment events, changes in mood, irritability feeling increasingly on edge or keyed up, or getting startled easily.

Veteran Genevieve Chase, who suffered a traumatic head injury after the vehicle she was riding in exploded, said told “Recon” that in spite of the struggles women try to overcome, their patriotism



remains intact.

“Even the women who are trying to get on their feet or have been struggling through military sexual trauma, substance abuse, suicide or any major issue, when they come home, every single one of them is still proud of their service,” Chase said.

The Pentagon Channel’s “Recon” series is a monthly, 30-minute broadcast that provides an in-depth look at operations, missions, military events, history and other subjects highlighting the accomplishments of U.S. military men and women. All “Recon” programs are posted on the Pentagon Channel’s website.

## DOD Releases Fiscal 2013 Budget Proposal

From DOD



WASHINGTON, Feb. 13, 2012, -- President Barack Obama today sent to Congress a proposed defense budget of \$613.9 billion for fiscal 2013. The request for the Department of Defense (DoD) includes \$525.4 billion in discretionary budget authority to fund base defense programs and \$88.5 billion to support Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), primarily in Afghanistan.

The proposed FY 2013 budget will ensure U.S. forces will remain capable across the spectrum of missions, fully prepared to deter and defeat aggression and to defend the homeland and our allies in the world’s complex security environment.

It results from an intensive strategic review conducted by DoD’s senior military and civilian leaders under the leadership and guidance of the president. The defense strategic guidance,

“Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” was published in

January 2012. The proposed budget makes more disciplined use of defense dollars to maintain the world’s finest military and sustain U.S. global leadership. It applies strategic guidance to force structure and investment.

It preserves the All-Volunteer Force as the foundation of the U.S. military. And it fully supports deployed warfighters. “This budget plan represents a historic shift to the future, recognizing that we are at a strategic point after a decade of war,” said Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.

“The plan is aligned to strategic priorities we have identified to keep America safe and maintain the strongest military in the world. It is also a signal of the department’s commitment to our men and women in uniform and their families.

We are also redoubling our efforts to make better use of the taxpayer’s defense dollar and meet our fiscal

responsibilities,” Panetta said.

The \$525.4 billion for the base budget includes cuts and other initiatives that will reduce planned spending by \$259 billion over the next five years and \$487 billion over ten years, levels that are consistent with the Budget Control Act.

The budget adjusts programs that develop and procure military equipment; begins to re-size ground forces; slows the growth of compensation and benefit programs; continues to make better use of defense resources by reducing lower-priority programs, and restructures the defense organization to achieve more efficient approaches to doing business.

This budget request focuses on funding priorities for a 21st century defense that protects the country and sustains U.S. global leadership.

It reflects the need for DoD and the military to adapt in order to proactively address the changing nature of the security environment and to reflect new fiscal realities.

## New rules mirror reality of women in combat

By Gretel C. Kovach



WASHINGTON, Feb. 12, 2012, -- Defense Department announced last week that it plans to open more than 14,000 military jobs to women that had been off-limits to them, at least on paper, because of restrictions on their service in combat.

Pentagon leaders acknowledged that the policy change was catching up with reality, because women have long since proved themselves in battle in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Changing sentiments and the wartime needs of military commanders accelerated an expansion of responsibilities for women that had been growing for decades.

The lack of clear front lines against an insurgency, manpower shortages at the height of the conflicts and cultural sensitivities of Iraqi and Afghan civilians that barred men from performing some critical functions in the war zone helped spur the transition, along with complaints that combat restrictions unfairly limited career advancement for women.

The result is that today female service members fight by land, air and sea.

Officially, they have been allowed to serve in air combat and on warships since the mid-1990s. Unofficially, through an administrative sleight of hand that has them “attached” but not formally assigned, they also serve with all-male ground combat units, walking on patrol with the infantry and supporting special operations personnel in the field.



For example, in October when Sgt. 1st Class Kristoffer Domeij, a 29-year-old Army Ranger from San Diego, was killed by a bomb attack in southern Afghanistan, a female National Guard soldier died with him. 1st Lt. Ashley White, 24, was attached to the unit as a Cultural Support Team member, U.S. Special Operations Command announced.

Considering the impending policy change, Staff Sgt. Brooke Parras, 32, an Iraq War veteran and platoon commander with the California National Guard border support mission ending in San Diego County, said, "The verbiage has caught up with the times."

The U.S. military's active duty force of about 1.4 million troops includes about 205,000 women. More than 140 female service members have been killed and 860 wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There is no safe spot for them in the war zone. Bases are rocketed. Supposedly friendly forces turn their guns on trainers. Roads are pocked with hidden explosives.

The main trigger-puller jobs in the ground combat arms will remain closed to women pending further review. While the debate over ending that final frontier continues, female troops are exposing themselves to mortal danger every day in the war zone.

"Women are contributing in unprecedented ways to the military's mission," demonstrating their ability to serve in an expanding number of roles on and off the battlefield, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said.

Here are some of those women from San Diego County installations who set aside personal safety to serve their nation at war.



Vernice "FlyGirl" Armour, the nation's first female African American combat pilot. Armour served two tours in Iraq flying Super Cobra Attack Helicopters and received a presidential citation. — Courtesy photo

### Attack helicopter pilot:

Vernice Armour, 38, a Marine veteran previously assigned Camp Pendleton, had always been an adrenaline junkie. In 1999, when she couldn't get a slot in flight school for fighter jets, she studied nonstop so she could be the first in line for the AH-1 helicopter gunship. "I said if I have to fly helos I want to fly the baddest thing out there, and that was Cobras," she recalled.

During the 2004 battle for An-Najaf, Iraq, Armour

was one of the attack helicopter pilots darting low over the cemetery and Marines fighting on foot.

When a squad was pinned down, in danger of being overrun, Armour's Cobra came to the rescue with a missile attack despite being low on fuel. Later one of the Marines told her, "man, you saved my life."

"That's what it's about over there, not whether you have to go to a separate bathroom or have separate sleeping quarters. It's about watching and protecting each other's back," whether you're male or female, Armour said.

### The bomb technician:

When Nichole Robinette joined the Navy in 2006 to become a bomb disposal technician, she simply wasn't strong enough to make the cut.

Men and women must pass the same test, which includes performing a minimum of six pull-ups and 42 push-ups, after a 500-meter swim. So she trained and trained, strapping weights to herself for pull-up after brutal pull-up.

Now Robinette, 32, is among the 1 percent of enlisted Navy bomb technicians who are women.

She returned recently from a six-month deployment to Afghanistan, where she helped destroy roadside bombs. The job requires lifting the unit's 100-pound robot on and off trucks and fast-roping out of helicopters with at least 70 pounds of gear.

The 5-foot-5 former college ice hockey goalie knows she has to perform as well as a 6-foot-3 sailor with more natural strength. "I can't just stop and be like, 'Hey, can one of you guys come over here and do this for me?'" she said.

If women are going to have a larger place on the battlefield, Robinette thinks the training and requirements should be the same for both sexes.

"The enemy is not going to say, 'I can't use this gun today because I'm going to shoot at a woman.' The threat is the same regardless if you are a woman or a man, so the preparation needs to be the same."

Read more about this article <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/feb/12/new-rules-for-military-omen-catch-up-with-reality/?page=2#article>



Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician 1st Class Petty Officer Nichole Robinette takes a break during a weapons practice session last year in northern Afghanistan

# AR-MEDCOM

## AR-MEDCOM Soldier receives Purple Heart

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Michele R. Sutak, AR-MEDCOM PAO



PINELLAS PARK, Fla. – Maj. Gen. Robert J. Kasulke awarded the Purple Heart to Sgt. 1st Class Russell O. Winn, a military policeman, and his family here Feb. 25, 2012 at the C.W. Bill Young Armed Forces Reserve Center for wounds he suffered in September 2010 during combat actions in Afghanistan.

Winn, 40, served with the 372d Military Police Company, 504th Military Police Battalion during his deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Their main mission was training the national Afghan police and their national army.

***“... I would not be here if it were not for you.” -***

***Sgt. 1st Class Winn Feb.2012***

While his squad was conducting mounted patrols during the Afghanistan elections in 2010, they responded to an attack by an improvised explosive device, as the team dismounted the vehicles, and were getting civilians to safety, a secondary IED detonated taking Winn out of the mission. Winn, and his fellow Soldiers survived, he suffered mild traumatic brain injuries.

Kasulke, the commanding general of the Army Reserve Medical Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Roger B. Schulz, the AR-MEDCOM's command sergeant major, presented Winn, with a Purple Heart, as his wife Cathi and their three daughters stand beside him.



Maj. Gen Robert J. Kasulke, the commanding general of Army Reserve Medical Command and Command Sgt. Maj. Roger B. Schulz, the AR-MEDCOM command sergeant major, presented the Purple Heart to Sgt.1st. Class Russell O. Winn, with his wife Cathi and their three daughter by his side during a ceremony Feb. 25, 2012, for wounds received in combat.

“I stand here today because of the care I received from the doctors, nurses, first responders, surgeons ...if it wasn't for your life-saving ability, many of us would not make it,” said Winn, the AR-MEDCOM provost marshal noncommissioned officer. He continued to praise the medics, “I saw you guys in action, and I would not be here if it were not for you.”



Sgt. 1st. Class Russell O. Winn, presents four bouquets to his wife Cathi and three daughters during a Purple Heart ceremony Feb. 25, 2012, at the C.W. Bill Young Armed Forces Reserve Center for wounds received in combat.

The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the armed forces of the U.S. who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action.” It is specifically a combat decoration.



Purple Heart Ribbon



Purple Heart Medal

This honor ceremony was close to home for Kasulke, the son of a World War II Purple Heart recipient, who was not around to see his father be awarded the medal.

“This is an honor and a privilege for me to do this ... to actually see this award being given,” said Kasulke. “I will not see this again in my military career at this level.”



## SOUTHEAST - MARS

# AR-MEDCOM Participates in Exercise Southbound Trooper

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt Marnie Jacobowitz, AR-MEDCOM PAO



FORT PICKETT, Va. — Soldiers of the 7236th Medical Support Unit participated in Exercise Southbound Trooper, February 18-26, 2012, a coalition-joint exercise, providing the opportunity to operate and train with the Canadian army and U.S. military forces in an effort to develop their medical techniques, skills and procedures while building a strong partnership.

Lt. Col. David Thompson, commander of the 7236th MSU, has prepared and planned for this exercise since July 2011. As commander, much of his focus is on professional development of his Soldiers through quality and realistic medical training while supporting and assisting the joint forces.



U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers of the 7236th Medical Support Unit of Fort Bragg, N.C., train alongside Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment from the West Virginia Army National Guard and the Canadian army, as they practice medical evacuation procedures of off-loading patients from a Black Hawk helicopter. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Marnie Jacobowitz/Released)

“We were chosen for this mission because our main focus has been training and our unit has developed a good reputation for training hard” said Thompson. “My top three priorities have been Soldier readiness, competence in warrior tasks and competence in Tactical Combat Casualty Care.”

Thompson added, “I am passionate about TCCC.” He explained the three major injuries that lead to preventable death on the battlefield. “There is bleeding out from an extremity wound, dying from an unrecognized tension pneumothorax, or collapsed lung, caused by a penetrating or blunt chest injury, and airway problems.”

The exercise had both day and night live fire air missions, bringing together Canadian Joint Terminal Attack Controller’s, an U.S. Army ground medical team and Navy Sea Hawks to practice casualty evacuations as part of the live fire exercise.

“We shouldn’t have Soldiers die due to bleeding out,” said Thompson, a native of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. “Every deployed Soldier is issued an Indi-

vidual First Aid Kit, and trained on how to provide care under fire, tactical field care and casualty evacuation care.”

Exercise Southbound Trooper provides the opportunity for Canadian Infantry soldiers to train in a tactical environment and be sustained by service support personnel, ranging from military police, transportation, quartermaster, communications, and medical assets, to name a few.



***“I was thrilled to work with the U.S. Army ...” -***

***Canadian army Pvt. Jean Gravel***

The 7236th MSU, Southeast Medical Area Readiness Support Group is from Fort Bragg, N.C., The SE-MARS is one of six commands that fall under the Army Reserve Medical Command. This is the first time the MSU has had this type of training opportunity with joint and coalition forces. The exercise challenged Soldiers in all areas of medical training; they were faced with mass casualty events, medical evacuations by air and ground, tending to injured Soldiers while traveling by air, both day and night, and setting up and utilizing a mobile medical in an austere environment.

Pvt. Jean Claude Gravel, a medic with 33rd Field Ambulance from the Canadian army out of Halifax, Nova Scotia, observed that the U.S. Army has different techniques of medical practices in comparison to the Canadian army.

“I learned a lot of procedures, like, getting in and out of a C-130 military aircraft; recognizing the four different types of heart beats and air-way inhalations.” said Gravel. “I was thrilled to work with the U.S. Army, and I am really looking forward to training with them again!”



Spc. Christina Mark (left) assists Pfc. Shelby Sullivan (right), with an intravenous line during a mass casualty training exercise. Mark and Sullivan are both medics with the 7236th Medical Support Unit. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Marnie Jacobowitz/Released)

## CENTRAL -MARSG

# 7228th Medical Support Unit at Atterbury works to improve services

Story By Staff Sgt. Matt Scotten, Atterbury-Muscatatuck Public Affairs



EDINBURGH, Ind. – Two months ago, a new rotation of medical professionals, Army Reserve Soldiers with the 7228th Medical Support Unit, out of Columbia, Mo., were deployed to Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center to support the mobilization mission here as the installation's medical detachment. Having had a few months to settle in, the unit is now focusing on streamlining the medical screening process for Soldiers and civilians who deploy and redeploy through the installation.

"The first few months were pretty tricky getting settled in," said Maj. Marc A Tregnago, commander of the Camp Atterbury Medical Detachment. "But we had great support from the Indiana Army National Guard, Fort Knox and the civilians who work here. We have things ironed out now and we are moving forward."

The 7228th is responsible for medical and dental readiness issues for military and civilian personnel mobilizing through Atterbury. The 7228th also supports the installation's Troop Medical Clinic and staffs the dental clinic during mobilization. Medical personnel assigned to the 7228th include doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and other medical personnel; dentists also are assigned to the unit and care for any dental needs identified.

The new medical detachment has been trying to make changes that will simplify their procedures and avoid redundant and unnecessary practices. According to Staff Sgt. Shane Vansteenburgh, Jackson City, Mo. native and noncommissioned officer in charge of the Troop Medical Clinic, "I think it's making things easier for all elements involved. We are focusing a lot on better communications between all of our various elements, such as the TMC, the soldier readiness center, case management, and headquarters."

In the past, the TMC would send files to case management on every single person who came through the TMC each day, said Vansteenburgh. As it turned out, case management didn't need files on every patient, every single day, and because the TMC was able to communicate with case management to identify that, an enormous amount of time and paper assembling those files for case management was able to be eliminated.

According to Vansteenburgh, the changes in medical operations are aimed at providing better service to patients.

"All of our individual sections have assigned responsibilities. Going through each of our processes and finding unique ways to do them seems to be making things flow easier and make things faster for the patient," he said. "Right now, our efforts are focusing on how to get our sick call patients seen in a faster manner. When we

have four providers and 50 sick call patients, we need to make sure we get those patients seen faster. I don't want guys sitting out there for two hours."

The TMC hopes to alleviate some of this by implementing an Army algorithm that allows sick call patients to be seen by medics, rather than only by providers, unless an acute illness is involved that requires a provider's services. Before, medics were only allowed to assist in the treatment room.

"Now, medics are being put back on track to do what they are trained to do," said Vansteenburgh. "They are trained to do everything in the field and there is no reason why they can't do those things and see those patients in here."

Spc. Brenda Schoeppner, Hastings, Minn. native and licensed practical nurse at the TMC, had never heard of Camp Atterbury before being deployed to the post.

"I think our job here has been really helpful to the Soldiers coming in and out. We are giving them the best care possible in the shortest time possible," she said. "There is always room for improvement and we are always looking for ways to do that, but I feel like we have already done quite a bit of improving."

The 7228th MSU will continue to do everything it can to ensure it is providing the best possible service to patients at Camp Atterbury.

According to Tregnago, the detachment has received a great deal of support from the base, the sustainment command, and range control, as well as the Individual Replacement Deployment Operation.



**Civilians from the Individual Replacement Deployment Operations process through medical screening at the Soldier Readiness Center at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center Feb. 15. The SRC, as well as the Troop Medical Clinic, are run by Army Reserve Soldiers from the 7228th Medical Support Unit from Columbia, Mo. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Scotten, Atterbury - Muscatatuck Public Affairs)**



## Enlisted Corner

### QMP reviews may separate some senior NCOs

By Jim Tice - Staff writer



WASHINGTON, Feb. 7, 2012, Several thousand staff sergeants of the Regular Army and Active Guard and Reserve (Army Reserve) are being considered for promotion to sergeant first class by two boards that convened in late January.

In addition to evaluating soldiers for promotion, the boards will screen certain retirement-eligible senior NCOs for possible involuntary separation.

The senior NCOs are subject to a Qualitative Management Program retention screening because derogatory information has been placed in their official personnel file by the Human Resources Command.

A QMP review typically is triggered when a general officer letter of reprimand, conviction by court-martial or Article 15, relief for cause evaluation report, or poor performance or behavior ratings are placed in the official file.

The overall zone of consideration for Regular Army promotion to E-7 includes staff sergeants with dates of rank of Feb. 4, 2009, and earlier, and basic service dates of Jan. 25, 1987 through Jan. 25, 2006.

The AGR promotion review includes all staff sergeants with dates of rank of Feb. 4, 2009, and earlier, pay entry basic dates of Jan. 31, 2006, and earlier, basic dates of Jan. 31, 1987, and later, and birth dates of July 30, 1954, and later.

The Regular Army E-7 board is the largest of the 80 centralized promotion, school and command boards conducted by the Army annually.

For example, the zone of consideration for the 2011 board included more than 38,300 staff sergeants.

The board recommended 6,702 NCOs for promotion, for a select rate of 17.5 percent.

The AGR board is much smaller, as it is restricted to Army Reserve staff sergeants serving full-time in the Active Guard and Reserve.

In 2011, the board considered 1,561 candidates, and selected 856, for a select rate of 54.8 percent.

Under policy changes implemented Oct. 1, these are the first sergeants first class boards that require (no waivers) candidates to be graduates of the Advanced Leaders Course.

The same round of policy changes increased the minimum time-in-grade requirement for primary zone consideration for sergeant first from three to four years, and the secondary zone window from two to three years.

The zone changes have the practical effect of reducing the number of soldiers screened for promotion, which in turn should sharply increase selection rates for both Regular Army and Active Guard and Reserve soldiers.

For example, similar changes applied to the fiscal 2012 RA master sergeant board that met last fall.

The overall selection rate was 16.2 percent, which compares to rates of only 6.9 percent in 2011, and 8.7 percent in 2010.

Soldiers who are selected for promotion by the 2012 sergeant first class boards will incur a three-year active-duty service obligation, which is one year longer than in the past.

### Chandler cites renewed emphasis on professional



WASHINGTON, Feb. 24, 2012--With the successful completion of the mission in Iraq and a continued transition to Afghan security forces, the Army will begin to reduce force structure.

It will also identify the qualities needed by this downsizing force, said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III in a recent roundtable on Soldier professionalism.

"For me, there are three criteria to identify professional Soldiers:

- competence, or the ability to do your job and do it well; -- character: the understanding that a Soldier acts on behalf of the nation, rather than his or herself; -- and commitment: which is a personal calling to serve in the Army and the nation, before all else," Chandler said.

Over the next six years, Chandler said the Army will reduce its active forces end strength from 570,000 to 490,000, which will include the reduction of at least eight brigade combat teams.

"We are committed to accomplishing these cuts in a controlled and responsible manner. But I want to stress -- even though we are in a transition, our mission has not decisively changed. It's to prevent war by our capacity, readiness and modernization, shape the environment in which we operate and when called to combat, fight and win our nation's wars, decisively," he said.

While the Army focuses a lot on competence, Chandler believes that character and commitment need a renewed effort and focus over the next several years.

"It's easy to see competence. You take a look at a counseling statement, or an evaluation, or you ask the Soldier a few questions about his or her job.

"It's not so easy to see character and commitment. For that, you really have to know someone. You really

have to be that leader -- the kind who guides, mentors and leads by example.

As Chandler travels around the Army and talks with Soldiers, he said he talks about these three characteristics. "And I talk about being professional. It is the cornerstone of being who we say that we are."

"Our Soldiers have shown this professionalism over and over the last 10 years of conflict. It's going to take professional Soldiers and leaders to tackle some of the issues we're faced with now: post-traumatic stress, post-traumatic brain injury, wounded warrior care, suicide, sexual assault and harassment, hazing, and to manage our drawdown and transfer, and transition Soldiers with dignity and respect back into the civilian world," Chandler said.

The Army must meet these head on, he said, to ensure Soldiers are not only receiving the care they need, but also are maintaining good order and discipline expected of the United States Army Soldier.

"I, along with the Army senior leadership, am committed to this and will not rest until we make significant and lasting improvements in all of these areas and more," he said.

Over this past year, Chandler, who said he's very proud to be part of the Army team, has traveled about 200,000 miles as the sergeant major of the Army.

"And wherever I go, I can't help but be in awe of the professionalism, dedication, and sacrifice our Soldiers, and our family members and civilians display every day.

Our Army is quite frankly the best trained, best manned, best equipped, and best led force in our history," he said, adding that Secretary of the Army John McHugh, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno and he are proud of what Soldiers and civilians have accomplished over the past decade.

"We've proven ourselves in every engagement and continue to display the physical and mental toughness long associated with the word Soldier."

Chandler also said the Army has spent the last few years analyzing and dialoguing about how to use the experience gained from the past decade of conflict to better understand the Soldiers' role as professionals, from senior Army leadership down to the lowest private in the formation.

"Professionalism is built on a bedrock of trust -- the positive relationship between the American people that is based on mutual trust and respect.



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III speaks at the Heroes Breakfast prior to the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio on Jan. 7, 2012.

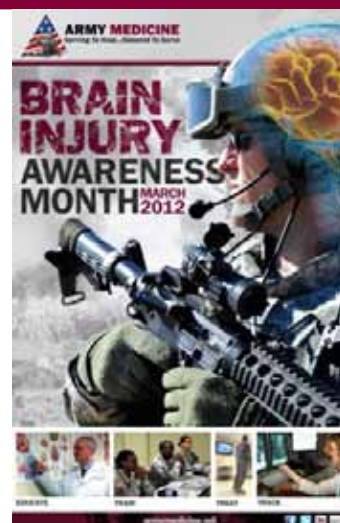
Only by military effectiveness performed through honorable service, by an Army with high levels of trustworthiness and esprit de corps, can the Army truly be a profession," Chandler said.



## Extreme Makeover

U.S. Army Lt. Laura Kostura of the 7236th Medical Support Unit, volunteered her time in Fayetteville, N.C., working with the Extreme Makeover: Home Edition team assisting in building a boarding house for homeless women Veterans. "I have many fond memories and a sense of accomplishment," said Kostura, who truly feels her best when helping others.

## March Observances

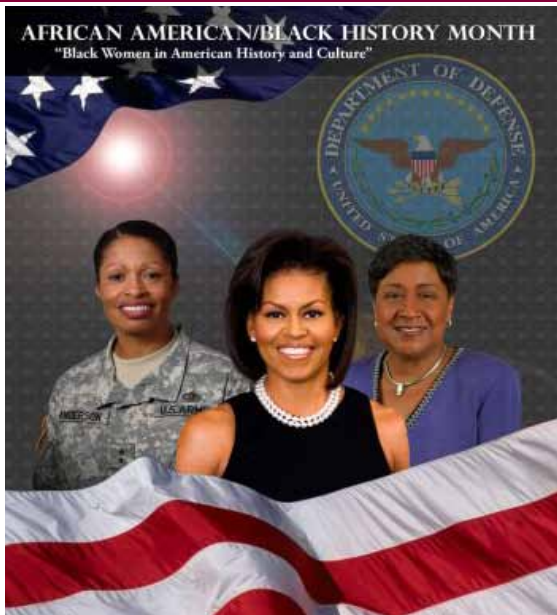


Happy Birthday  
to the  
Medical Enlisted Corps





## Good To Know



### Army Reserve Medical Command celebrated African American/Black History Month

By Staff Sgt. Marnie Jacobowitz



PINELLAS PARK, Fla., Feb. 27, 2012--Army Reserve Medical Command celebrated African American/Black History Month at the C.W. Bill Young Armed Forces Center. Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Tonja M. Brickhouse addressed the Soldiers and Civilians of AR-MEDCOM on the "Black Women in American History and Culture" and she shared her life experiences and accomplishments. Brickhouse is the Director of the Department of Solid Waste & Environmental Program Management for the City of Tampa.



Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Tonja M. Brickhouse, addressed the Soldiers and Civilians of AR-MEDCOM on the "Black Women in American History and Culture." (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Enid Ramos-Mandell/Released)

### Watch: The Tuskegee Airmen Visit the White House

By Colleen Curtis



WASHINGTON, Feb. 19, 2012, --President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama invited a group of American heroes to the White House for a very special movie night.

The guests were retired Tuskegee Airmen, the African American veterans who overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II, and whose achievements paved the way for full integration of the U.S. military.

The movie was "Red Tails", a new film that tells the Tuskegee story. "Red Tails" was produced by George Lucas, directed by Anthony Hemingway and stars Cuba Gooding Jr., who all joined the President, the First Lady and the Airmen for the screening in the White House theater.



### What's going on in your command

#### Contact your units Public Affairs Officer

**AR-MEDCOM PAO:**

727.563.3730 or 3962 or 3738

**CE-MARSG PAO:**

**Lt. Col. Berg/Maj. Condon 847.266.5708**

**SE-MARSG PAO:**

**Maj. Meeker/Capt. Taylor 270.314.1916**

**NE-MARSG PAO:**

**Capt. Zavala (Senior UPAR) 718.390.1279**

**WE-MARSG PAO:**

**Vacant Contact AR-MEDCOM**

**APMC PAO:**

**Maj. Stone (Senior UPAR) 404.279.6605**

**MRTC PAO:**

**Maj. Johnson/Staff Sgt. Acosta (Senior UPAR) 801.656.3911**



## Black History

To the Soldiers, Families, and Civilians of the Army Reserve Medical Command,

African American women have significantly contributed to our history and paved the way in our Nation and our Army since the American Revolution. This month we celebrate Black Women, our theme this year is "Black Women in American History and Culture."

This year's theme honors the efforts of women of African descent who have played countless roles in shaping our nation. These women of indomitable spirit have enriched the nation through their intellect, artistic expression, leadership and patriotism.

From Harriet Tubman, the most famous black female conductor on the Underground Railroad who lead an armed expedition in the war which liberated more than 700 slaves, to Rosa Parks, the mother of the modern Civil Rights Movement, to First Lady Michelle Obama, who leads an effort to highlight and support service members and their families, these courageous women serve as role models for all to emulate.

The Army benefits from African American women and their leadership in our ranks, from Cathay Williams, the first female to enlist posing as a man to serve as a Buffalo Soldier in the U.S. Army, and today we welcome the recent promotion of Major General Marcia Anderson, the Army's first African American female Two-Star General and Ms. Tracey Pinson, the Army's highest-ranking female African American Senior Executive Service member.

Cathy and I encourage the Army Reserve Medical Command Family to honor publicly sacrifices and contributions of African American women, Soldiers, Civilians and Families by encouraging and supporting commemorative activities to celebrate African American/Black History Month.

Army Strong!

RJK

Robert J. Kasulke  
Major General, MC, USAR  
Commanding

Medics First - Warriors Always



## President's Day

To the Soldiers, Families, and Civilians of the Army Reserve Medical Command,

George Washington is a great patriotic leader who I truly admire. As we take time over the President's Day Weekend, many will spend the time with family and friends, I ask you to take a moment to reflect on the meaning of the holiday.

President's Day is designed to honor and remember the leaders of the United States and their contributions to creating the country it is today. It is celebrated on the third Monday of February, which falls on February 20th.

This day, originally called Washington's Birthday, is a day to honor the "father of our country," George Washington. In the 1960s, reformers sought to include the name to President's Day, honoring Abraham Lincoln, a president who helped reshape our country. The name of the federal holiday has never been officially changed, although it is well accepted and celebrated throughout America as President's Day.

Today, Washington would see the advancement of his Country and mankind, confirming what he said more than two centuries ago. "Under a good government (which I have no doubt we shall establish) this Country certainly promises greater advantages, than almost any other, to persons of moderate property, who are determined to be sober, industrious and virtuous members of Society."

As you enjoy this time, whether it be traveling, working or relaxing, I encourage you to "Think Safety" in all that you do.

Thank you for all for making this command an enjoyable one, I appreciate your dedication, hard work and commitment to excellence.

RJK

Robert J. Kasulke  
Major General, MC, USAR  
Commanding

Medics First - Warriors Always





Troops,


This week we released the *Army 2020: Generating Health and Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset Report 2012*, also known as the *Gold Book*. This report is a continuation of a process that we began three years ago to study and improve the health and discipline of the Force. It follows the *2010 Health Promotion, Risk Reduction, Suicide Prevention Report*. The *Gold Book* provides critical insight into health and disciplinary issues that impact the Force and will assist commanders, leaders, and service providers in making informed and balanced decisions regarding Soldier rehabilitation, treatment, retention and transition.

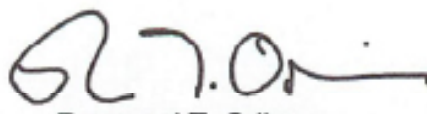
The *Gold Book* is only four chapters, with a strong focus on the health of the Force, discipline in the Force, and the major issues the Army must tackle regarding health and discipline in the years ahead. With Force reductions and resource constraints looming, it is critically important that the Army is at peak readiness. Each Leader has the difficult task of ensuring that their Soldiers are receiving the medical care they need, while maintaining the high standard of discipline that is the cornerstone of our professional Army.


We continue to make real progress in improving access to healthcare and unit and Soldier discipline. However, the unacceptable increase in sexual assaults and domestic violence, coupled with the high number of suicides demonstrates there is much work to be done. The only way Leaders will be able to carry out this critical mission is by fully understanding the challenges associated with promoting both health and discipline after a decade of war.

We expect leaders to read this report, understand it, and educate and prepare their subordinate leaders for the challenges they will face in the coming years ahead of the strategic reset. We must continue to meet these challenges head on to ensure Soldiers get the help they need, while maintaining good order and discipline.

We sincerely appreciate your hard work to date and look forward to discussing the critical issues associated with health and discipline during our future visits.

  
Raymond F. Chandler, III  
Sergeant Major of the Army

  
Raymond T. Odierno  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

  
John M. McHugh  
Secretary of the Army

# Get Fit & Healthy

## Let's Move: Two Years of Healthy Changes for our Nation's Kids

From Colleen Curtis



WASHINGTON--Let's Move! was launched on February 9, 2010, and in the past two years, significant progress has been made to solve the problem of childhood obesity. Parents, businesses, educators, elected officials, members of the military, chefs, physicians, athletes, childcare providers, community and faith leaders and kids themselves have made substantial commitments to improve the health of our nation's children. Through working together with Let's Move!, these groups have provided children with healthier food and greater opportunities for physical activity in schools and communities, helped get families the information they need to make healthier decisions, supported a healthy start in early childhood, and have worked to ensure more people have access to healthy, affordable food.

Tomorrow, First Lady Michelle Obama is starting a tour to celebrate the second anniversary of the initiative. On her trip she will meet with some of the many teachers, elected officials, faith and community leaders, parents and children who have embraced the principles of Let's Move! and are making a difference in the lives of our children.

Just some of the many Let's Move! accomplishments of the past two years that will be celebrated on the road include:

- In December 2010 President Obama signed into law the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, a groundbreaking piece of legislation, to help all kids have healthier food in school. In January 2012, USDA released new school meal regulations to update the quality of nutrition through the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. Changes include ensuring kids are offered and served more fruits, vegetables and whole grains and less sodium, saturated fat and trans fats.

- Walgreens, Supervalu, Walmart and several small grocers announced a commitment to build or expand 1,500 stores in communities with limited or no access to healthy food. The companies estimated that 9.5 million people who currently have limited access to nutritious food will now have healthy food in their neighborhoods and create thousands of jobs for local residents. In addition, the Fresh Works Fund committed 200 million dollars to eliminate food deserts in California.

- Darden, the world's largest full service restaurant company, which owns Olive Garden, Red Lobster

and others, made a commitment to improve their kids' menus by offering a fruit or vegetable and low-fat milk with every meal, as well as reduce total calories and sodium by 20% over the next 10 years across their menus.

- We launched My Plate and Mi Plato – an easy to understand icon to help parents make the healthier choice for their families. Over 5,700 groups have partnered with the USDA to get simple nutritional information to families across the country.

- We far exceeded our goal for one million people to complete the President's Active Lifestyle Award in a year – and in one year alone 1.7 million Americans achieved their PALAs.

- We exceeded our goal in the Healthier US School Challenge with over 1,500 schools meeting high standards in nutrition and fitness, and the list continues to grow.

- Walmart's Nutrition Charter committed to lowering the cost of fruits and vegetables as well as healthier options like whole grain products by 1 billion dollars in 2011. In addition, Walmart pledged to work with manufacturers to remove 10% sugar and 25% sodium in categories throughout the store.

- The country's largest food manufacturers pledged to cut 1.5 trillion calories from the market place by 2015 through their Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation.

- The American Beverage Association committed to put clear calorie labels on the front of their products to give consumers better information.

- We launched Let's Move! Child Care to ensure that our youngest children are getting a healthy start. To date approximately 2,000 child care professionals and organizations have registered online to implement new criteria for nutrition, physical activity and limiting screen time. The Department of Defense, General Services Administration and Bright Horizons committed to implement new standards – that commitment represented over 2,000 centers serving nearly 300,000 children.



First Lady Michelle Obama joins local students at the physical activity stations during the Let's Move! series kick-off on the South Lawn of the White House. May 25, 2010.



- Let's Move! Salad Bars to Schools has delivered over 1,000 salad bars to schools in the past year – making fruits and vegetables accessible to hundreds of thousands of kids.

- Faith and community organizations have initiated a broad range of activities including logging over 1,500,000 miles walked and working to provide healthy food to their congregations.

- We worked with the US Tennis Association to build or refurbish over 3,000 kid-sized tennis courts across the country and sign up over 250,000 kids to complete their PALAs.

- Businesses stepped up to help schools meet their challenges, like All-Clad, which donated 1,000 cooking demonstration kits for chefs who are working to make schools healthier.

## DOD to Improve Nutrition Standards Across the Armed Services for the First Time in 20 Years

From DOD



WASHINGTON, Feb. 9, 2012,--Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs and TRICARE Management Activity director Dr. Jonathan Woodson announced today the Military Health System's (MHS) new obesity and nutrition awareness campaign.

It will feature cooperative efforts with each of the armed services, as well as our partners in Military Community and Family Policy, to encourage service members, our retired beneficiaries and dependents make better nutritional choices and take a more active role in their personal health.

This campaign will include improving nutrition standards across the services for the first time in 20 years. New changes will bring more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and entrée choices that are lower in fat to the 1,100 service member dining facilities in the coming months.

"Our primary focus is on the health and well-being of service members, their families, and our retirees," Woodson said. "Obesity is a preventable problem which, if combatted, can help prevent disease and ease the burden on our overall Military Health System."

"The Department of Defense is making a groundbreaking commitment to the health of our troops and their families. And in doing so, they're not just sending a powerful message throughout the military community, they're sending a message to our entire country," First Lady Michelle Obama said. "Whenever our men and women in uniform step forward, Americans take notice.

We launched Let's Move! Museums and Gardens

and more than 500 institutions in all 50 states and the District of Columbia have signed up to offer active exhibits and healthy food choices.

When our service members make healthy eating a priority in their lives, the rest of us are more likely to make it a priority in our lives. Simply put, this is America's entire military once again stepping forward to lead by example."

The MHS obesity and nutrition awareness campaign will feature cooperative efforts with each of the armed services to achieve the following:

Update menu standards at military dining facilities for the first time in 20 years; Assess the nutritional environment of military facilities; Ensure healthier foods are available in dining facilities;

Department of Defense schools, and other places where service members and their families purchase food on base, including vending machines and snack bars.

"We are intent on focusing on preventable illnesses to help our people stay out of our clinics and hospitals by improving their physical condition," Woodson said.

"We have the legal and moral responsibility to do our part to maintain the health and well-being of everyone in our military community. And, we are committed to a strategy that changes the direction of healthcare to health in the military community, and, in many ways, for all Americans."



**Unit Public Affairs Representative's (UPARs) let us know what your unit is doing for monthly observances ... during the BTA and around your local area.**

**UPARs inform your Leaders and Soldiers who you are, market your command by telling the Army Reserve story!**

**Find AR-MEDCOM, APMC, MARSGs and MRTC units on FACEBOOK.**



# Fitness- Exercise Tips

## Military Training Exercise

By Brain Bullman

### Do you have what it takes?

Through the years, the approach to physical training within the military has evolved to coincide with the tactical requirements of the modern-day soldier. I have outlined is a example of 3 day a typical 6-week program for a Special Forces operative. To see the rest of the 6 week program and other work out program check out:

<http://www.bodybuilding.com/fun/military-style-training.html>

### Day 1

#### Fitness Test:

Sit and Reach flexibility test  
Push Ups: maximum in 60 seconds  
Sit Ups: maximum in 60 seconds  
Pull Ups: maximum in 60 seconds  
Run: 2 miles as fast as possible

Swim: 100 meter nonstop using any stroke, without touching the side or bottom of the pool.  
Forced march with 30-pound rucksack: While carrying 30 pounds in a backpack, walk 3 miles in 45 minutes on a road or 1 hour if walking cross-country. (Wear well broken-in boots with thick socks.)

### Day 2:

Push Ups: 3 sets of maximum in 30 seconds  
Run: 3 miles at moderate 8-to-9 minute mile pace  
Rope Climb or Pull-Ups: 3 sets to failure

Forced march with 30-pound rucksack: While carrying 30 pounds in a backpack, walk 5 miles in 1 hour and 15 minutes on a road or 1 hour and 40 minutes if walking cross-country.

### Day 3:

Forced march with 30-pound rucksack: 5 miles in 1 hour and 15 minutes (along the road) or 1 hour and 40 minutes (cross-country).



# Heathy food tips & recipes

## Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the American Dietetic Association

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## Power Up with Breakfast

Breakfast gives you energy to start the day. A healthy breakfast is important for everyone. Get the morning nutrition you need with these quick breakfast ideas.

- Make instant oatmeal with milk instead of water. Mix in raisins or dried cranberries. Top with chopped walnuts.
- Layer low-fat yogurt with your favorite crunchy cereal and sliced fruit or berries.
- Mix up a breakfast smoothie made with low-fat milk, frozen strawberries and a banana.
- Top a bowl of whole-grain cereal with blueberries, sliced peaches or any favorite fruit. Pour on low-fat or fat-free milk.
- Top a toaster waffle with low-fat yogurt and fruit.
- Stuff a whole-wheat pita with a sliced, hard-cooked egg and low-fat shredded cheese.
- Spread a flour tortilla with peanut butter. Add a whole banana and roll it up.
- Spread almond butter on a whole-grain toasted bagel. Top with apple slices.
- Add lean ham and low-fat Swiss cheese to a toasted whole-grain English muffin.



**Springtime Cereal**

Makes 2 servings

¾ cup wheat and barley nugget cereal  
 ¼ cup 100% bran cereal  
 2 tsp toasted sunflower seeds  
 2 tsp toasted almonds, sliced  
 1 Tbsp raisins  
 ½ cup bananas, sliced  
 1 cup strawberries, sliced  
 1 cup raspberry or strawberry yogurt,  
 low-fat

Mix the wheat and barley nugget cereal, bran cereal, sunflower seeds and almonds in a medium bowl. Add raisins, bananas and half of the strawberries. Gently stir in the yogurt and divide between two bowls. Scatter the remaining strawberries over the top and enjoy!

**Nutrition information per serving:**

Calories: 352  
 Fat: 6 g  
 Saturated fat: 1 g  
 Carbohydrate: 69 g  
 Sodium: 272 mg  
 Fiber: 8 g

**With light yogurt (sugar substitute):**

Calories: 268  
 Fat: 5 g  
 Saturated fat: 0 g  
 Carbohydrate: 53 g  
 Sodium: 263 mg  
 Fiber: 9 g

*Recipe from A Healthier You: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans ©2005 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

If your taste buds just don't crave breakfast foods, try these:

- Peanut butter and banana sandwich on whole-grain bread
- Leftover veggie pizza
- Deli turkey, a slice of low-fat cheese and lettuce wrapped in a tortilla.
- Leftover rice mixed with low-fat yogurt, dried fruit and nuts. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Power up with a healthy breakfast and you're off to a great start!

For a referral to a registered dietitian and for additional food and nutrition information visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).



The American Dietetic Association is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by:

**AR-MEDCOM**

Authored by American Dietetic Association staff registered dietitians.

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United States Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USAMRICD)  
 United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease (USAMRIID)  
 Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI)



## Hospital Management of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear & Explosive Incidents Course

30 July-3 August 2012

Will you know what to do if you are faced with mass casualties from a catastrophic event?

- Expert Classroom Instruction
- NIMS, NRF, HICS
- Multistation Practical Exercise
- Group Activities & Discussions
- Multi-Hospital Mass Casualty Tabletop
- Equipment Demonstrations
- Hands On Training Exercises



We would like to present to you an advanced-level education opportunity from the US Army, the HM-CBRNE course. It offers healthcare professionals state-of-the-art instruction that may save lives in a major WMD incident. Designed for civilian and military healthcare managers and providers, it is presented by some of the nation's leading authorities in biological, chemical, and radiation incident management.

This course was developed with hospital level objectives – clinical and non-clinical. It features interactive seminar discussions and dynamic exercises. The HM-CBRNE course is intended to help mitigate the existing gaps in support of hospital operations during a major WMD event. Additionally, it benefits all other routine and crisis hospital operations. It also provides a great opportunity to meet other professionals from across the nation who face the same challenges you do.

### Attention To All:

- Hospital Management
- Emergency Planners
- Emergency Responders
- Public Health Officials
- Physicians
- Nurses

To join us or to learn more about this opportunity, contact the Chemical Casualty Care Division. CME/CNE/CEU available.

US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense  
 3100 Ricketts Point Road, Aberdeen Proving Grounds, MD 21010-5400  
 Commercial Phone: 410-436-2230 Fax: 410-436-3086 DSN: 584-2230  
<https://ccc.apgea.army.mil>

To Register, click here: [https://ccc.apgea.army.mil/courses/In\\_house/CBRNE.htm](https://ccc.apgea.army.mil/courses/In_house/CBRNE.htm)



## ARE YOU RETIRING?

**\*\*Transition to E-Echoes\*\*** We continue to seek ways to improve the way we communicate important messages with you. Thanks to your overwhelming feedback, we're in the process of updating and improving the **registration process**.

Thank you for your patience...and more importantly...thank you for your service!

The purpose of the **Army Echoes** newsletter is to keep Army Retired Soldiers and Family members abreast of their rights and privileges, inform them of developments in the modern Army, and to inspire goodwill and a desire to support the Army in their civilian communities.

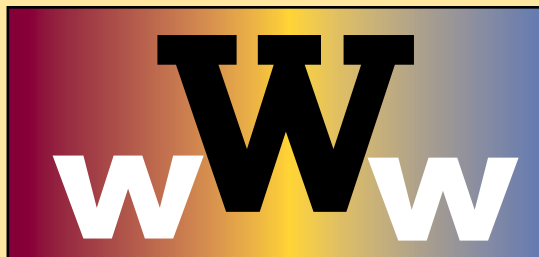
The first Retired Army Personnel Bulletin was published in March 1956. It was a four page, monthly bulletin, designed to respond to the Army's "urgent need" to get information to its 100,000 Retired Soldiers. Retirees had previously received information through inserts in their paychecks. This method did not provide information to those retirees receiving compensation from the (then) Veterans Administration and not receiving pay from the Army, and it limited information to a maximum of 350 words a month.

**The publication's name was changed to Army Echoes in January 1979.** Today, *Army Echoes*, is a 16 page bulletin. It is published three times a year and mailed to 900,000+ Retired Soldiers and SBP annuitants. The correspondence address that the retiree has on file at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service-Cleveland Center (DFAS-CL) is used to mail *Army Echoes*. The correspondence address that Reserve Retired Soldiers, not yet age 60 and not yet in receipt of retired pay, have on file at the Army Human Resources Command in St. Louis is used to mail *Army Echoes* to them. Through the years, the name, size and frequency of publication have changed. However, the publication's mission of providing a vital communications link between the Active Army and Retired communities has remained unchanged.

**Comments concerning Echoes** should be directed to the Editor, *Army Echoes*, HQDA, 200 Stovall St, Room 5N35, ATTN: DAPE-HRPD-RSO, Alexandria, VA 22332-0470.



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