

HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

Vol. 33 No. 50 Serving the U.S. Army community in Hawaii December 17, 2004

What's Inside



Fallen Soldier

Comrades remember Soldier killed by IED.
A-3

Schofield Barracks F Quad Dining Facility's Hours Christmas Day
•Breakfast:
8 a.m. – 9 a.m.
•Lunch*:
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
•Dinner:
3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.

*Lunch is the main meal of the day, just like Thanksgiving Day. Price is \$5.40 for lunch.



Ohana Day

Supporters of the military show their appreciation in one fun-filled day.
B-1

Hawaii Army Weekly Production Schedule Change
Dec. 24 - 31 generic editions of the HAW will be distributed. Army-edited HAWs will resume Jan. 7, 2005.



Sports

Golf, football and an "Awesome Army Brat" abound.
B-5, B-6

Hui O'Na Wahine Thrift Shop Closure
From Dec. 17 to Jan. 4. The thrift shop on Schofield Barracks will re-open at 9 a.m. on Jan. 4. Call Grace Gertin at 624-0405 for more information.

BAH Increase A-4
DoD Job Changes . A-7
Smart Shoppers . . . A-8
Puppeteer Visit . . . B-3
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Olson: 'Troops help shape history'

By Master Sgt. Terry Anderson
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – It's been more than a month since citizens of Afghanistan cast their first vote for democracy in the country's 5,000 year history. Experts predicted insurgents would disrupt the elections with 'spectacular attacks' against civilian and coalition targets – attacks that never occurred.

The top operational commander on the ground in Afghanistan said Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom have a lot to be proud of, but not to discount the resilience of the enemy.

"I don't think we should underestimate what's left of al-Qaeda," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, commander of

Combined Joint Task Force 76 and the 25th Infantry Division (Light).

"The al-Qaeda itself is still a viable organization. In some instances, they may be more dangerous because of their need to launch some kind of high visibility success which may cause some to revert to desperate acts."

Olson said attacks against the coalition are up, but the attacks are being resolved in favor of the coalition.

One constant threat against Soldiers is improvised explosive devices. An IED attack near Deh Rahwod took the life of two Soldiers and wounded one from 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment on Nov. 24. Olson said each loss affects him profoundly, but that the mission must go on.

"I have deep emotion when we lose a Soldier, Sailor,



Spc Daniel P. Kelly

Spc. Ryan Brodin, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crew chief with Co. C, 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment ensures security on his side of the aircraft this year.

Airman, or Marine over here," Olson said. "I feel disappointed that there wasn't something we could have done differently that would have saved a life. In

some cases I can point to something and if we had done it differently, we'd still have some of those folks here. But you can't dwell on that."

Journalist interacts with Afghan children



Staff Sgt. Joseph P. Collins Jr.

Sgt. Frank Magni, with the 17th Public Affairs Detachment, chats with children during a humanitarian aid mission in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, Nov. 16. (See more stories on humanitarian missions on page A-6.)

Soldiers urged: Stay Hawaii

By Ed Aber-Song
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

Some things in life are "too good to be true," but a new program called "Stay Hawaii" now being offered to Soldiers is the "Real Deal."

Sgt. Maj. Lisa Jones, 25th Infantry Division (Light) retention sergeant major, described the program, offered to Soldiers as an incentive to continue their service here.

There are many benefits of staying in Hawaii, began Jones.

"Children can remain in the same schools, spouses that work outside the home can enjoy longevity in their workplaces; more time to enjoy the many outdoor activities available on island;

"Opportunity to spend family time and just an overall way to be part of the Hawaiian Ohana - not to mention that there's no worry about the hassle of moving for awhile!"

"Family satisfaction is foremost on the minds of the

See "Stay Hawaii" Page A-5

Army divers work near 'Gilligan's Island'

By Spc. Charles Hayes
Staff Writer

Members from the Army's dive unit removed sections of coral reef that were beginning to block a channel entrance to Coconut Island Dec. 8.

"We are providing a public service and using the underwater time for training," said Capt. Scott Miller, commander of the 7th Engineer Detachment (DIVE), 29th Engineer Battalion, Fort Shafter.

Primarily, the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology uses the island for research but the University of Hawaii also uses the island and the surrounding coral reef for marine biology classes.

Parts of the island were also once used to tape some of the old TV show "Gilligan's Island."

"This project was brought about in August 2003 when we called HIMB and asked if there was anything that we could do to help. We had to

meet all regulations, not only state, but also military and federal, to be able to do this. It took a lot of planning," said Miller.

"We're transplanting coral because we need to clear the channel," said Jim Lakey, HIMB facilities manager. "Within a month or two this will re-establish. This kind of work happens all over the world."

The coral was carefully broken up and moved in cages to another location where it could reestablish and grow.

"The reef that is getting the transplanted coral heads was sheared when a military plane crashed into it. The military ordered the coral cleared and it has never re-grown," said Gordon Grau, a University of Hawaii zoology professor and director of the university's Sea Grant College Program.

"We are able to re-establish the reef that was killed in the

See "Divers" Page A-5



1st Sgt. Rodney Heikkinen

Spc. Edgar Jimene and Sgt. Matthew Hawkey from the 7th Dive Det. transplant coral during a restoration project Dec. 7.

We want to hear from you

The Hawaii Army Weekly welcomes letters and commentaries from readers. To submit call the editor at 655-4816 or e-mail editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com. The deadline for articles is the Friday prior to the week of publication. Send all articles in Microsoft Word or text format.

OPINION & COMMENTARY



A heartfelt thank you

Commentary
Anonymous Soldier
U.S. Army

I am a Soldier serving in Afghanistan, and am proud of this fact. While home on R&R, I noticed a trend in the commentaries and reporting on our nation's activities in the Middle East. After careful consideration, I offer you a perspective to what I saw and read while on leave. There are many perspectives on our current activities in the Middle East. People are able to voice their perspectives openly, especially those in contrast to those of the government, is a credit to the principles of the nation that you and I belong to. Until recently, this inherent right, which many take for granted in our country, was not available to the citizens of the countries in which we currently operate. My concern is there appears to be a lack of balance to the "perspectives" offered by politicians, Soldiers, and citizens. Sometimes successful operations receive less coverage in favor of the "sexier" stories of indiscretions and perceived failures. It is simply easier to point out what "should have been done," after-the-fact, than it is to make the hard decision based upon available information (as is always the case). The next time a criticism of the current administration or operations in Iraq and Afghanistan appears in a public forum via print, radio or TV media, consider this: I commend American people on their ability to separate their opinions on operations conducted from the Soldiers executing them. The welcomes

and support received by Soldiers from ordinary citizens and veterans returning home are truly therapeutic on several levels. I sincerely thank you for this invaluable gift. I thank the numerous celebrities who support our Soldiers and their families. You have a powerful platform from which to express your views. To musicians such as John Michael Montgomery and Toby Keith, your songs of Soldiers' heartache play across Iraq and Afghanistan in offices, headphones, and funerals. Then there are the remarkable volunteers of the USO and Red Cross, and airlines employees. What they do is often thankless, which makes their service all the more commendable. Reuniting families under tragic circumstances, tirelessly providing care packages and a hug, going the extra mile, these are but a few of the examples of what these often taken for granted people do. Know that your actions bring a much-needed sense of home and comfort to those who serve in austere conditions. Thank you. For those who need to judge our "success," I offer this; success cannot be based upon the number of enemy killed or friendly casualties incurred. The situation we are in is much more complicated and to simplify it in such a way is misleading. One objective for Coalition Forces, as well as the insurgents, is the people. What we attempt to do is provide a safe environment to facilitate transformation of a government by the local people. Please do not attempt to superimpose criteria for success from several thousand miles away. Those whom it is most important to, the citizens of the country we assist shape that "criteria" daily. Remember too, the negative acts of a few do not overshadow the outstanding and heroic acts of thousands. The military is a cross-section of America. We have good, bad, and indifferent people wearing the uniform of our nation. And, we can expect indiscretions and substandard performance by a few. Our track record speaks for itself and I am proud of our Soldiers and their accomplishments. Perhaps, the hardest job assignment belongs to the families left behind. They face the burden of the unknown as well as coping with everyday tasks previously shouldered by two. As much as it warms my heart to hear someone tell me "Thank-you" or "Good job," these families deserve to hear those words as well. America, please reach out to them. They are your neighbors, teachers, employees and bosses, and they are easily the toughest people I know. They inspire me. I am proud to tell people I am an American. The flag I wear on my shoulder bonds me to you and to my belief in the ideals I have sworn to defend. Not everyone is as blessed as the people born in the United States of America. With this blessing comes responsibility that helps define us as a people. Your support is as much an example of this as are the actions of the deployed Soldiers overseas. I hope and pray that every one of you feel as good about what you do for a living as I do.

With All Due Respect,
A Soldier

A Soldier's story

Commentary
1st Sgt. Robert Jennings
Co. A, 1-21st Inf.

This week was busier than Christmas shopping the day after Thanksgiving. We had a spike in enemy activity this week. With the fall of Fallujah, the success of coalition forces in Mosul, we knew we were not too far from it being our turn. As we head into the final six weeks before the country's long awaited elections, we expect the activity to increase. Dec. 5, 4 p.m. – Police informed one of our interpreters that a man was in the hospital with wounds from an explosion. They had reports a man was injured while emplacing a roadside bomb. After staking out the hospital room, they arrested a man that visited the wounded man. On his cell phone, he had numbers from Fallujah and phone wallpaper with the words "Viva Fallujah." This is proof to everyone here that the mess is about to get worse. Those fighters that did escape Fallujah and others sympathetic to their cause are in our area. Now we just need to figure out which few thousand they are out of the 900,000 people in the city. Dec. 6 – Alpha Company is moving through the city in order to assist in apprehending a known high value target. Four minutes after execution, all objectives are secure, and the suspect is in custody. This last mission was successful in that we apprehended a known trained sniper that had caused a few casualties in our area of operation. Marksmanship is not one of the quality traits of the enemy we face, so removing a highly trained one off the streets is a huge relief. Dec. 7, 9 a.m., – I and members of 3rd Platoon move to deliver 52 kerosene heaters to five of the schools in or area. The weather is starting to turn cold, and many of these schools don't even have electricity. We were greeted with open arms and smiles from the principals and teachers of all of the schools. Every classroom and every principals' office will have heat as the weather turns. 11:05 a.m. – A large explosion to the south is reported by the roof observation posts. Immediately reports are coming from the coalition convoy caught in the blast. By the Call sign, everyone knows it was the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Mark Dewhurst. The ready squad was immediately dispatched, and reported that one of his escort vehicles was damaged with no casualties.

Dec. 7, 4:18 p.m. – Police report that a construction worker saw two men attempting to emplace a roadside bomb. He immediately informed the police and the Iraqi bomb squad was dispatched. This is the action we wish all the people of the city would take. Because he wasn't afraid to come forward, a roadside bomb, probably targeting coalition or police convoys, was removed. After thanking the man, he was rewarded for his citizen duty. Dec. 10, 5:40 a.m. – A small explosion southeast of the patrol base was reported. Police were dispatched to find someone had rigged an explosive device to a cell phone tower. A second device was discovered and disarmed. It seems they are targeting their own infrastructure for the purpose of striking fear in citizens' minds. This has been one of the more difficult things we try to deter. We just need to continue to patrol and talk with the people for reassurance. Dec. 11, 2:14 p.m. – A huge rumble is heard from the patrol base. You can see the large black plume of smoke to the south. One of our battalion convoys was stuck by an explosive device, was taking fire from a rooftop, and had casualties. Bravo Company was on patrol in the area and began movement to the location. I immediately alerted the ready squad and the ambulance. Once the location was confirmed, the squad moved out to evacuate the casualties. After all reports had been filed it was determined that this was a vehicle packed with explosives parked on the side of the road. When the convoy passed it was detonated. One Soldier received minor shrapnel wounds to the face and one has a possible leg fracture. One interpreter was also treated for concussion. As I explained a few weeks ago, this is one of the tougher explosive devices to detect. There are so many cars parked on the side or near roads that it is very difficult to detect which one will blow up. We have put in protective measures and are training our police on them. Hopefully in the near future, this type of bomb will be eliminated. We expect the coming weeks to be similar to this one because of the elections growing near. This is why the think tank in Washington decided to keep us on the ground through February. We know this area better than any other soldiers in the Army, and no one can defend it or police it up like we can. The Soldiers of Alpha Company are ready to accept the challenges over the next few months. Wives, husbands, children, moms, and dads of 2nd Brigade Soldiers - be patient; we have a job to do for just a little while longer, and then we'll be home for good.

Voices of Lightning

What is your favorite Christmas tradition?



"Ever since I was little, we would go to church on Christmas Eve, come home and get our pajamas on, get in the car, and drive around to see the Christmas lights. We do this with my kids now."
Dina Williams
Family member



"My favorite tradition is Santa Claus coming at night and leaving unwrapped gifts for the kids. Seeing the kids in the morning come to see what Santa has brought them is the best part."
James Hart
Retired Army



"My favorite tradition is putting up the tree with the family, except this year it's just me and my daughter. We try to get a themed ornament every year, and we play Christmas music and bake cookies."
Nichole White
Family Member



"We buy each of our kids a new ornament every year. When they get older and leave home, they will have a whole set of ornaments to take with the memories that go with them."
Linda Smith
Family Member



"My favorite tradition is Christmas Day opening presents and having breakfast with the entire family. I am Mexican, so we make tamales that we share with my grandparents."
Sgt. Ralph Monroy
1-21 Infantry Battalion



"My favorite tradition is just being with all my family. We have a special cake, German chocolate that we share on Christmas Eve after dinner."
Sgt. Derrick Gore
115 Military Intelligence Battalion

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Memorial service honors a ‘courageous Soldier’

Sgt. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE McHENRY, Iraq – Like many Soldiers, Spc. David P. Mahlenbrock faced danger each day while deployed in Iraq.

But Mahlenbrock’s duties as a Sapper, or combat engineer, were different and more dangerous than most.

Mahlenbrock participated in numerous ordnance destruction missions conducted by Company B, 65th Engineer Battalion, where he and other Sappers have removed tons of ordnance from deserted Iraqi army bunkers.

Insurgents often used these munitions to build improvised explosive devices to injure and sometimes kill Soldiers and Iraqi people.

On top of these hazardous missions, Mahlenbrock also risked his life on many route clearance missions. The objective of these missions was to clear IEDs from main supply routes.

“As a Sapper, David’s courage during route clearance and ordnance destruction missions helped protect the lives of many Iraqi civilians and many of us here today,” said Capt. Matthew Bryant, commander of Co. B, 65th Eng. Bn.

It is this courage that eventually caught up to Mahlenbrock while returning to this base from a route clearance mission Dec. 3.

An IED, which he has hunted for in many previous route clearances, exploded onto his vehicle and took the 20-year-old’s life.

Five days later, hundreds of Soldiers gathered here to attend a memorial ceremony and pay tribute to Mahlenbrock.

“I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Spc. David Paul Mahlenbrock,” Sgt. Stephen Fritz, Mahlenbrock’s team leader, said during the ceremony. “He was a great Soldier as well as a great friend.”



Fritz went on to say that Mahlenbrock was known as “Brock” to his fellow Sappers, and displayed integrity, loyalty and selfless service in his job performance.

“Brock took his job seriously in mind and heart, and had true passion of being a combat engineer,” Fritz said.

“I will always keep you in heart and mind, Brock. You will always be a part of first squad, second platoon, and will be missed by all of us,” Fritz said.

With his untimely death, Mahlenbrock now joins a dedicated few.

“David is with a special group of Americans now,” Bryant said while speaking at the ceremony. “Those Americans who fully understand the price of freedom, the sacrifice to maintain these liberties we hold so dear to our hearts.

“We will one day walk again with David,” Bryant added.

Mahlenbrock’s squad leader, Sgt. Shannon Williams, then spoke to the audience about how his Soldier spread holiday cheer.

“I will never forget when he bought a Christmas CD right after Halloween and how he played it every single day,”

Williams said. “It would always brighten everyone’s day.

“His memory ... I will always hold near and dear to my heart, especially around Christmas,” Williams said.

Unfortunately, Mahlenbrock will not see the rest of this holiday season or especially his wife, Melissa and baby daughter, Kadence, who he adored so much.

“His wife, Melissa and newborn baby daughter, Kadence, were a special part of his life,” Fritz said. “He would speak of them often and even make crafts and poems for them.”

Mahlenbrock first met his newborn daughter in October while home on R&R.

“He returned with a huge smile on his face, telling everyone in the company that his daughter was so beautiful,” Bryant said.

Mahlenbrock, a New Jersey native, was a M240B gunner as well as a combat engineer for Co. B, 65th Eng. Bn., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light).



Courtesy photo

A 500-pound bomb, rigged as an IED, was found in an old IED hole by Sappers performing route clearance on Nov. 12.

Sappers become IED hunters in Iraq

Sgt. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE McHENRY, Iraq – When Soldiers conduct convoys within Iraq, one thing they watch out for and stay far away from are improvised explosive devices.

For the Sappers of Company B, 65th Engineer Battalion, attached to Task Force 1-27 Infantry, it’s a little different. When the Sappers perform route clearances, their intent is to hunt down these IEDs and make sure they get destroyed.

Route clearance missions are carried out on a daily basis inside TF 1-27 Inf.’s area of operations. The Sappers have been executing these missions three to four times a week.

“The main thing about the route clearances is ensuring that the [Multi-National Forces] can use the main supply routes safely and also to help the civilians. We make sure no one gets hurt or hit by an IED,” said Staff Sgt. Earl Mendoza, a squad leader with Co. B, 65th Eng. Bn.

Since February, the Sappers have cleared more than 50 IEDs as part of their route clearance missions. The busiest month was July, when they found 13 IEDs in just seven straight days.

In order to find IEDs, the Sappers drive in the middle of the roadway at about 10 to 15 miles per hour. If something looks suspicious along the roadway, they stop and investigate.

“We look into common spots where [insurgents] would place IEDs, like an old IED hole or underneath culverts,” said Sgt. Joseph Gumbakis, a team leader with Co. B, 65th Eng. Bn.

Disturbed dirt and trash with wires or antennas protruding from it are other things they also look out for along the roadside, Gumbakis said.

When the Sappers do find an IED, they secure the area, look for secondary explosive devices, find the trigger man and call the explosive ordnance detachment guys who either disarm the IED or destroy it on sight, Mendoza said.

While performing route clearance on Nov. 12, the Sappers found a 500-pound bomb rigged up as an IED hidden inside an old IED hole.

“That bomb, hooked up as an IED, could have done some major damage,” Mendoza said.

Stories like the 500-pound bomb discovery and many more help build the confidence of Soldiers who travel along these main supply routes, Mendoza said.

Unfortunately, being in harm’s way has taken a toll on the Sappers.

“There have been times where we’ve found IEDs the hard way,” Mendoza said. “We’ve been lucky only to have very minor injuries.”

On top of their route clearance obligations, the Sappers also conduct other engineer-related missions, such as force protection and weapon cache destruction.

(Editor’s Note: Spc. David Mahlenbrock, a former IED hunter, died Dec. 3 when a bomb exploded after a route clearance mission. See story above for information about his memorial service held in Iraq Dec. 8.)

Briefs

Hawaii Army Weekly Seeks “Awesome Army Brats” – This is a periodic column featuring exceptional military youth and their stories. If you know someone we should feature, contact the Hawaii Army Weekly at 655-4816 or email to haw@honoluluadvertiser.com.

The HAW also seeks volunteer writers. If you have a penchant for writing and would like to learn the newswriting style; we want to meet you.

Candidates should be reliable, able to meet deadlines, willing to give and receive honest feedback. Call 655-8728 or e-mail editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.

Great Aloha Run Registration – Get ready to run in the 2005 Great Aloha Run on Feb. 21. Entry forms are available at all military fitness centers or online at www.active.com. Be sure to select the military form, \$1 from each entry returned to Army programs. Entry fee is \$20 until Jan. 21. Call 555-8789 for information.

Christmas Basketball and Volleyball – Participate in games and shooting contests to win prizes at the Reindeer Basketball Challenge at the Tropics on Dec. 20, 2 p.m. Cost is \$1. On Dec. 21, 4 p.m., participate in Santa’s Volleyball Serving Contest. Cost is \$1. For more information, call 655-0002.

Employment help at ACS – This workshop is the first step in helping you find the job you want. Learn how to prepare for the job search process; get employment information on federal, state, private sector and staffing agencies; see the reference materials, job listings, and computers available for use at the Army Community Service employment area. Workshops are scheduled for Jan. 7, 14, 21 and 28 at 9 – 10:30 a.m. at ACS Schofield Barracks, building 2091. Call 655-2400 to register.

Honolulu Christmas Concert – Kalihi Union Church invites the military to attend a Christmas concert Dec. 23 - 24 at 7 p.m. at 2214 North King St., Honolulu 96819. Call Michi Arakaki at 841-7022 ext. 703 for more information.

Thrift Store Job Opening – The Hui is now accepting applications for a bookkeeper. Interested candidates should have accounting and computer experience. The job is for approximately 40 hours per month. For more information or to get an application, visit the Thrift Shop, building 2107 on Schofield Barracks, behind the ACS building.

Surf Competition – Attention surf enthusiasts: If you know how to surf, are on active duty, and want to prove yourself and represent, come compete for Army Hawaii in an inter-service Surf Meet, contact Peter Burke at the USAG-HI Sports Office at 655-9914 or burkep@shafter.army.mil. Surf Meet dates are Jan. 22 – 23 at Army Pililaau Recreation Center in Waianae. Burke surfs at the White Plains Beach, Barber’s Point every Saturday and Sunday and can meet anyone at 9:30 a.m. through December and January at the stage.

Kalakaua Golf Course Closure and Farewell Tournament – The course located on Schofield Barracks will permanently close Dec. 31. The course will become the site for more than 700 new homes for enlisted Soldiers. Most of the course’s trees will be preserved as part of the new neighborhoods. A farewell tournament will be held Dec. 28. Visit the Kalakaua pro shop for registration details. Army Hawaii Family Housing, LLC has budgeted for a new golf course. Its location has not been announced. Visit www.mwrarmyhawaii.com or www.ArmyHawaiiFamilyHousing.com for more information.

Free Basic Skills Courses – Classes are offered in reading and mathematics each quarter at the 9th Regional Readiness Command Army Reserve Center, located at Fort Shafter Flats. It is open to all military personnel, family members, civilians and others in the community who want an academic review before taking military tests, college placement exams, GT

– Due to upgrades, the current MRI capability is scheduled to shut down Dec. 26 and be back online Jan. 5, 2005 to accommodate the new installation. Patients needing MRIs will receive consultations from their providers to have MRIs through the TriWest Network on a case-by-case basis.

For more information, the Radiology Department may be reached at 433-2970 or 433-

"IP/Discharge Pharmacy."

The Automated Oahu Consolidated Refill Pharmacy System may be reached at 433-6962 for refills. Patients with prescription questions may call 433-7880. The Navy Exchange Refill Pharmacy will remain open during these hours. Call the NEX Pharmacy at 422-2394.

2005 Basic Allowances For Housing Rates Announced

The Department of Defense released the 2005 Basic Allowance for Housing (BHA) rates today, continuing the department’s initiative of reducing military members’ out-of-pocket housing costs. In total, the planned increase in housing allowance funds for fiscal 2005 above the fiscal 2004 amount is about \$2.5 billion. The 2005 rates represent the final phase of the planned buy down in out-of-pocket housing expenses. Other components of the increase are geographic rate protection and housing cost inflation.

Out-of-pocket expense, the portion of the typical member’s housing cost that the member is responsible for, has been reduced from 3.5 percent last year to zero this year. The 2005 rates represent the final phase in a series of steps taken to bring the average member’s out-of-pocket expense to zero by 2005. However, the actual expense for an individual may be higher or lower than that average, based on his/her actual choice of housing.

Three components are included in the BAH computation:

- * Median current market rent
- * Average utilities (including electricity, heat, and water/sewer)
- * Average renter’s insurance

Total housing costs are calculated for six housing profiles (based on dwelling type and number of bedrooms) in each Military Housing Area (MHA). BAH rates are then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without dependents. An estimated \$12.3 billion will be paid to more than 910,000 service members in 2005. Data are collected annually for approximately 400 MHAs in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. An important part of the BAH process is the cooperation from the services and local military housing offices in the data collection effort. Input from local commands is used to determine in what neighborhoods data is collected and to direct the data collection effort towards adequate apart-

ment complexes and individual housing units.

For members with dependents, average increases in the BAH are approximately 8 percent. A typical E-4 with dependents, for example, will find his/her BAH about \$47 per month higher than last year. An E-8 with dependents will have about \$60 more in his/her paycheck.

An integral part of the BAH program is the provision of individual rate protection to all members. No matter what happens to measured housing costs, an individual member in a given location will never see his/her BAH rate decrease. This policy assures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract will not be penalized if the area’s housing costs decrease.

Geographic rate protection has also been provided to members. Geographic rate protection maintains a BAH rate at last year’s level while the planned buy down in out-of-pocket expense is phased in. Geographic rate protection means that newly arrived members to an area will not see BAH rates that are substantially less than current members’ rates.

The continual improvement in housing allowances represent the Defense Department’s commitment to the preservation of a compensation and benefit structure which will provide members with a suitable and secure standard of living, that will sustain a trained, experienced, and ready force in the future.

Keiki Resources Fair at Blaisdell – Jan. 22-23, at the Neal S. Blaisdell Exhibition Hall, in Honolulu can learn about organizations and providers of children’s pro-

grams, services, and products.

The fair will feature programs from academic enrichment to special needs, sports to the arts, schools and camps to music lessons, health care and health insurance to financial planning for college, plus many retail items. Expect 200 exhibitors and entertainers to provide face-to-face information, hands on exploration activities, games of skill and chance, and there is just plain ol’ fun stuff to play with, inflatable to jump on, and ponies to ride. Fairgoers will be entertained, and educated by Abracadabra, Jeff Gere, Mad Science, Marden, James McCarthy, Mr. Dan the Magic Man, and more with music, magic, songs, stories, and juggling, some from atop a unicycle.

For more information, call 521-KIDS, or visit www.childhoodresources.org

Deadline for Ordering Bricks for Walkway of Honor Extended – The deadline for ordering engraved bricks to honor veterans, active duty service members, Reservists, family members or others in the “Walkway of Honor” that surrounds the Pacific War Memorial aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, has been extended to Dec. 31. The Walkway of Honor surrounding the base of the memorial is comprised of plain and engraved 4” by 8” bricks. Each engraved stone (with up to three lines of 20 characters each, counting spaces and punctuation marks) will be set apart by adjacent stones without inscription. For more information, contact the Pacific War Memorial Assn. at (808) 533-3759, fax (808) 533-3129 or visit www.pacificwarmemorial.com.

Bush calls Soldier



Army photo

Sgt. Brendan Kitchens, 2-35th Inf. gives school supplies to Afghan children. Kitchens’ unit selected him to take a phone call from President George W. Bush on Thanksgiving Day.

By Master Sgt. Terry Anderson
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

Sgt. Brendan Kitchens, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, squad leader, was one of 10 service members worldwide called by President George W. Bush Thanksgiving Day.

Department of Defense officials first contacted CJTF-76 leaders to pick a service member to speak with the president. CJTF-76 Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe in turn directed leaders to choose a “squared away” Soldier to receive the president’s phone call.

“Whatever their decision-making process was (to get to talk to the president), I was happy with it. I’m glad I had the opportunity to do it.”

The call from President Bush only lasted a minute and a half, but for Kitchens, a 24-year-old from Lawrenceville, Ga., the memory will last a lifetime.

retest, etc. The next courses are Jan. 6, Feb. 24 and March 10. All class sessions are held on Tuesday and Thursday, from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Classes take place at building 1554 on Pass Street, Rooms 104 and 105, Fort Shafter. Call 438-1600 ext. 3293 or 3298 for details.

Military Exchange Credit Card Interest Rate To Rise – The Exchange Credit Program is raising the interest rate for the Military STAR card to 10 percent.

The interest rate will increase by .25 percentage points to become 10 percent. The increase is based on the Nov. 10 announcement by the Federal Reserve raising the prime rate to 5 percent.

Military STAR card terms and conditions state that the interest charged will be based upon the current prime rate plus five percent.

The interest rate will become effective after the January billing statement. Any new purchases after the January billing statement will constitute acceptance of the revised interest rate.

Customers will receive notification of the rate change in their December billing statement.

The rate increase doesn’t apply to the zero-interest Military Clothing Plans, special promotions already in existence or to deployed customers whose balances are treated under special conditions or have balances at reduced rates.

The 2004 and 2005 Hui O’ Na Wahine Scholarship Packets To Be Available – Pick up starts Jan. 5. Applicants must be HUI members by Dec. 31 (or family members of a HUI member). For more information, contact Judi Dewhurst at 624-4083. Hui O’ Na Wahine Welfare Grant applications will be available in January. For more information, contact Robin Orner at 624-6979.

Tripler’s MRI Machine to Shut Down Temporarily

2967.

Tripler Army Medical Center’s 4th Floor Outpatient Pharmacy Closes Early Friday – It will close Dec. 17 from 1 - 3 p.m. for their holiday party. During this time, patients may use the Inpatient Pharmacy on the 2nd floor, G Wing in Room 413. Directions: After getting off the elevators, turn towards Mountainside and follow the signs on the left walls pointing to "Inpatient Pharmacy" or

Soldiers run Honolulu Marathon in Afghanistan

By Master Sgt. Terry Anderson
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Running in his first marathon, with limited training, Mike Baskin beat the field Dec. 12 in a race held in the birthplace of the Taliban in Southern Afghanistan.

Almost 200 service members and civilians completed the Honolulu Marathon at Forward Operating Base Ripley. Runners traveled to FOB Ripley from all over Afghanistan, arriving by helicopter early on the morning of the race.

“I wasn’t actually supposed to be here to run it,” said Baskin, the acting company commander for Co. A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment.

“Our company commander is on leave and I wasn’t supposed to leave FOB Anaconda, but I worked it out with our battalion commander, and here I am.”

Baskin, a 24-year old California native, finished the 26.2 miles in 3 hours, 12 minutes and 16 seconds, more than 15 minutes ahead of second place runner and friend, Ian Grimstead.

Jill Stevens was the first female runner to cross the finish line in 3 hours, 45 minutes, and 20 seconds, placing her seventh overall.

“Me and Captain Grimstead joked with each other on who was going to

win the race,” Baskin said. “But we all came out and our main goal was to have fun, it’s something non-mission related that we’ve enjoyed.”

Ivan Hurlburt, a signal officer with 2nd Bn, 5th Inf. Rgt., helped organize the race here, on an austere base north of Kandahar.

Hurlburt coordinated with the Honolulu Marathon Association organizers to get official running numbers, finisher shirts, medals, and the shell lei given to every finisher.

Private organizations donated prizes to the Honolulu Marathon Association for the runners, ensuring no one left Tarin Kowt empty handed.

Hurlburt and the rest of the ‘Bobcats’ hosted the marathon and provided all of the logistical support for the race.

Artillerymen from 3rd Bn., 7th Field Artillery Rgt. fired the cannon that began the race. Engineers from the 65th Eng. Bn. assisted in flattening the run route before the race.

The runners had to circle the perimeter of the base five times, battling a hill dubbed ‘mini-Diamond Head’ halfway around the airfield. An unexpected rain shower the night before kept the dust down, but made parts of the course muddy.

The base is at 4,400 feet in elevation and the thin mountain air presented a challenge to all the runners.



“That’s just part of the beauty of running here in Afghanistan,” Hurlburt said.

“It’s a little more difficult than your average marathon, and it’s a little more exciting, we think.”

Part of the excitement was the possibility of direct or indirect attacks by insurgents, attacks that never materialized.

The run course consisted

of gravel and rock, adding to the race’s difficulty. Palm trees made of wood decorated the run route to remind the service members of their home in Hawaii, helping the runners to endure the grueling monotony of the marathon.

“Running a marathon in Afghanistan is interesting,” said Stevens, a Soldier with 1st Bn., 211th Aviation Rgt., running in her fifth



Video still by Sgt. Jeremy Clawson

Above: Runners struggle up 'mini-Diamond Head' halfway around Forward Operating Base Ripley in Southern Afghanistan.

Master Sgt. Terry Anderson

Left: 1st Lt. Mike Baskin, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf., crosses the finish line at FOB Ripley. Baskin was the first to finish the marathon, with a time of three hours, 12 minutes.

marathon.

“It is a combat zone and you’ve got to be careful where you step, but I’ll be proud and honored to finish a marathon in Afghanistan.”

Holding a successful marathon in an area that was once the home of Taliban founder Mullah Omar seemed an unreachable goal just eight months ago, when the ‘Bobcats’ deployed to Afghanistan.

Now, it’s a reality.

“It’s a testament to the Soldiers and the Marines, and the work that we’ve done here, especially in this province,” Hurlburt said.

“When we got here there was literally nothing on the ground, except a flight line.

“We’ve built this area up to a point where we can actually hold an event like this.

“We’re real proud of that.”

Divers

From A-1

1940s and clear the harbor,” Grau said.

“We plan to learn from this. It is a systemic restoration of individual coral heads transferred to a patch reef in a habitat known to thrive.”

“Moving the coral reef is the HIMB way of preserving it. The only other way to open the channel is to dredge it out. That means that they would just get rid of the coral completely by digging it out carelessly,” said Miller.

“The more coral we put

here, the more it improves the health of the bay,” Lakey said. “Dredging would be the wrong way to open the lagoon. It would kill the coral.”

The divers worked on the project from Nov 29 until Dec. 10. Capt. Miller went on to say that there were other projects around the island in the works.

“One of our next projects is the removal of coral from around a pier that is ready to collapse. Once the coral has been removed, we will demolish the pier and rebuild a new one,” said Miller.

Stay Hawaii

From A-1

Soldiers who have reenlisted to Stay Hawaii,” she said.

Jones said Soldiers in Hawaii, and deployed from Hawaii, are re-enlisting for a number of reasons.

“A lot of Soldiers are just doing it because of the pride that comes from being a Soldier,” she said. “They’re down in the mud in Iraq and Afghanistan, and they’re proud to serve.”

Jones added that even wounded veterans from Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom are raising their right hand to Stay Hawaii.

Other big reasons are the opportunities to join the Stryker team and stay a

part of the Tropic Lightning Team.

“We have a reenlistment option (Current Station Stabilization Reenlistment Option) that offers Soldiers an opportunity to affiliate with 2BCT Stryker or 3BCT Unit of Action (UA).

“This option allows Soldiers to reenlist and meet the life cycle end date of the unit - each of which carries a three-year life cycle. In addition to reenlisting for this option, eligible Soldiers and their command sponsored family members receive In Place Consecutive Overseas Tour benefits - free round trip airline tickets to the home of record, in addition to other incentives,” said Jones.

“There has been tremendous success with affiliation and I attribute that to Soldiers’ strong desire to stay Tropic

Lightning and their interest to be part of history.”

Hundreds of Soldiers have already lined-up to fill the new Stryker jobs. “Retention has been filling Stryker positions for more than six months and have reenlisted over 450 Soldiers to affiliate with the unit,” said Jones.

“3BCT UA is off to a successful start, having been initiated just two months ago and so far show over 100 affiliations approved with Soldiers reenlisting daily. Either of these units offer Soldiers and their families an opportunity to Stay Hawaii and enjoy the numerous benefits of remaining in Hawaii”

Soldiers who wish to re-enlist Hawaii should contact their unit career counselors.

Army doctor fights to save Afghan infant’s life

By JO1 (SW/AW) Kristin Fitzsimmons
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – In a county where there is very little health care for Afghan citizens, one Army doctor stationed with the 325 Forward Support Battalion in Kandahar refused to accept that there was nothing that could be done to save the life of an infant.

A couple of weeks ago, Pediatric Doctor Maj. Bob Nelson was approached with a delicate case when a local national Noorulah with his son Zabiullah Jan walked to the front gate of the Kandahar medical facility in order to save his child’s life.

“The father had just taken his 26 day-old son to a local Afghanistan medical facility and was told that there was nothing that could be done to save the infant’s life,” said Nelson, who is attached to the 25th Infantry Division (Light). “When [the father] brought the baby to our facility the child was diagnosed with

Myelomeningocele. Unfortunately, there was also nothing we could do to treat the child here ... the only thing our staff could do was show the father how to properly clean and apply sterile dressing to cut down the risk of infection.”

Nelson, who has worked with several patients with Myelomeningocele, a birth defect where the backbone and spinal canal do not close before birth and understood that time was extremely critical. It was after his first meeting with Zabiulla Jan, he decided to explore the options of transporting the infant to the United States for surgery.

“It just didn’t sit well with me that there was nothing we could do to save this child’s life,” said Nelson. “I knew Zabiullah Jan could receive the proper treatment in the U.S. that would save his life.

There were several huge hurdles before Nelson could even begin to hope this critical transition would happen.

“Time was a enormous factor while working this issue. It was essential to get the infant

to the U.S. as soon as possible before the case was untreatable,” said Nelson. “In that short period of time, I had to find a hospital to do the surgery, funding, proper clearance for the infant and father and transportation. Luckily, with a little work most everything seemed to fall into place almost immediately.”

A medical center in Sacramento, Calif., agreed to do the surgery. American Airlines and cargo handler DHL volunteered to transport Zabiullah Jan and his father back to the states. Two Afghanistan businessmen in the Sacramento area raised funds helped to provide Nelson with the foundation to get this mission underway.

The last obstacle before heading to Sacramento was to obtain a U.S. visa for both father and child. But due to security clearances and background checks, it was decided that Zabiullah Jan would initially travel without his father and once everything had been processed Noorulah would fly to the United States to

be with his son.

“It was a difficult decision to have to make, but Noorulah signed all of the necessary waivers for me to be able to travel with Zabiullah Jan to the states,” said Nelson. “He understood what was going on and told us to do whatever it took in order to save his son’s life.”

During the final preparations to bring Zabiullah Jan to the United States on Wednesday, he passed away early in the day on Dec. 13. Although the exact cause of death is still unknown, Nelson believes it might have stemmed from an infection that entered through the birth defect causing meningitis.

“This is a very tragic end after so much effort and commitment had been made by so many to try to get the baby to the U.S. for the needed surgery,” Nelson said. “It is a wonderful thing to know that many, many people opened their hearts and worked so hard to save this child’s life, and I would like to thank everyone who was involved for all their effort.”



Sgt. J. Antonio Francis

An Army doctor, Maj. Bob Nelson, attached to the 25th Inf. Div. (L) coordinated the funding and visas necessary to transport a critically ill Afghan infant to the U.S. for medical care. The infant died before medics like these could do the exchange. Pictured are Soldiers from Medical Task Force 325 receiving a medical evacuation patient from the 68th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Nov. 4.

Day begins with humanitarian missions but ends in violence

Sgt. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

ABASSI, Iraq – Task Force 1-27 Infantry Soldiers travel outside their forward operating bases every day to help Iraqis rebuild their country better than before.

Insurgents in the area despise their efforts and counteract with violence.

Time and time again, insurgents attack Soldiers with direct and indirect fire in hopes of scaring them off. But what insurgents may not know is that these attacks don’t make the Soldiers go away.

On Dec. 7, a TF 1-27 Inf. humanitarian mission, which included meetings and donations, was carried out in the Abassi region.

Capt. Robert Bockholt, a fire support officer, attended a weekly city council meeting with Abassi sheiks to discuss projects and problems within the local populace.

“We talked about all the points that we had to discuss – security issues, project funds, basically civil affairs issues,” Bockholt said.

At the same time, Capt. Patrick Sherman,



Sgt. Sean Kimmons

Capt. Patrick Sherman, a physician assistant with TF 1-27 Inf., performs a courtesy exam for a sheik. After humanitarian efforts ended Dec. 7, the task force convoy was hit with an IED.

a physician assistant, walked over to the Abassi hospital to check if it needed medical supplies or had other issues.

About an hour later, the convoy of Soldiers mostly from the Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company,

TF 1-27 Inf., headed to a small village near the Tigris River called Shajarah.

There, Sherman and Sgt. James Scaggs, a combat medic donated \$500 worth of medical supplies to the newly revamped Shajarah hospital, while Bockholt inspected the construction of the building.

“The medical supplies are a show of goodwill,” Sherman said.

After delivering the donations, Sherman and Scaggs interacted with the hospital staff and oversaw the level of health care being provided at the facility.

“It’s a show of support to the local doctors,” Sherman said. “If the local people see me with their doctor and I am agreeing with what he is saying, it increases their confidence in their own medical facilities.”

After an assessment of an elementary school, the convoy headed back to Forward Operating Base McHenry.

It was becoming a typical humanitarian day until Soldiers heard an explosion alongside the roadway.

A cloud of black smoke mixed with dust hovered over the road after an improvised

explosive device detonated onto their convoy.

The vehicles in the convoy quickly distanced themselves from the danger zone and picked up security positions on both sides of the explosion site.

The IED was detonated ahead of the lead vehicle and only damaged a windshield.

It is not uncommon for this to happen to TF 1-27 Inf. Soldiers while conducting these types of missions. These ongoing attacks can become very frustrating to Soldiers who are trying to help many Iraqi people, but are threatened by a few.

“I think it’s sad when we’re trying to leave this place better than we found it, a select few tries to blow us up,” Bockholt said. “There are people that don’t know how to express their anger because of what’s going on, so they use violence.”

“[Insurgency] never stops me,” said Sherman, who has been under direct fire on a number of occasions. “[Insurgents] think it does but it absolutely does not affect me, it actually emboldens me to go out more.”

“It’s not going to stop us, because we still have a mission to do,” Bockholt said.

Combat Christmas cards are in the mail

By Lt. Col. Brian R. Haebig,
Logistics Task Force 524

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan – Throughout the month of November, Soldiers from the Logistics Task Force 524 here took out their drawing pads, colored pencils, and computers with drawing programs to compete in a Task Force Christmas Card contest.

More than 700 of these Make a Way Christmas cards are enroute to the United States for families awaiting a special card over the holidays.

In an effort to give the folks back home something really special, LTF 524 conducted this contest to let those with artistic and computer talent show their stuff.

Of the eight entries submitted, the winner was Sgt. John Herbert of Headquarters Company, 524th Corps Support Battalion, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Herbert has been drawing since he was 5-years-old when he saw his Uncle Kenny Sistrunk’s drawing of Jesus, and he sat down and without prompting and



The Logistics Task Force 524 Christmas Card drawing competition winner submitted by Sgt. John Herbert, 524th Corps Support Battalion. More than 700 of the cards will be mailed to families.

came up with his own rendition that amazed his mom.

“Drawing is fun because you can capture anything that comes to your mind and bring it to life” said Herbert.

“Being out here in Afghanistan, I wanted to dedicate the card to every unit involved in operations in Eastern Afghanistan.”

The tradition of home-

made unit Christmas cards dates back to World War I or earlier. We used pictures of Christmas cards from WWI and II and Vietnam as examples to let everyone know that this is a great tradition – and to really tell our story to the families back home.

The card stock and envelopes were provided by the LTF 524th Family Readiness Group.

Phase one of DoD civilian job transformation to begin

By Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Implementation of the first phase of the Defense Department’s new National Security Personnel System is slated for next summer, senior officials said here this week.

The new civilian personnel system is one of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld’s key initiatives designed to transform DoD operations to better meet 21st-century needs, Charles S. Abell, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said during a Dec. 13 interview at the Pentagon.

The NSPS replaces an outmoded, 50-year-old civilian personnel management system, Abell noted, that had rewarded employees for longevity. NSPS, he said, incorporates a performance-based pay system in tandem with a restructuring of the civilian work force to better support department missions.

The first grouping, called Spiral One, of NSPS implementation is planned for July 2005, Abell reported. This will affect about 300,000 U.S.-based Army, Navy, Air Force and DoD agency civilian employees and managers. DoD currently has about 700,000 civilian employees.

“That (implementation) date is flexible, because we are not going to implement it until we are ready,” he noted.

Officials will be working with installation and unit commanders from now until July, Abell noted, to discuss NSPS training needs and other issues prior to implementation.

Commanders, supervisors and employees “will want to get familiar with the system” between now and July, Abell pointed out. NSPS Program Executive Mary E. Lacey, who accompanied Abell at the interview, echoed his point.

“Before any work unit goes into the National Security Personnel System,” Lacey explained, “senior leadership of the department, as well as their local management, is going to be there with them, making sure that the folks are trained, making sure that they fully understand the intricacies of the system as well as fully understand what’s going to be expected of them.”

The NSPS, she said, represents “an incredibly exciting opportunity for the department to move forward in its transformation” of how it uses, manages and trains its civilian personnel.

“I like to say that people are the only appreciating asset in the Department of Defense,” Lacey maintained. The National Security Personnel System, she added, sets the stage so the department “can truly acknowledge and reward” its civilian employees.

It’s anticipated that Spiral Two – to comprise most of the remaining employees — will begin around January 2007, Lacey said. But officials note that will happen only after certain certification occurs and criteria are established, based on Spiral One assessments. A third spiral grouping will comprise DoD laboratories should current legislative restrictions be eliminated.

The Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center at Tinker Air Force Base, Lacey reported, will be among the first units to implement the NSPS in July 2005. Air Force Maj. Gen. Terry Gabreski, who also participated in the interview, commands the air logistics center, which performs maintenance on KC-135 aerial-refueling tankers and B-1B, B-52 and B-2 bombers.

The NSPS phase-in, Gabreski said, will affect about 7,000 civilian employees at the Oklahoma City center.

(Editor’s Note: Article has been edited for length.)

Students embark on educational tour of Makua

By Spc. Charles Hayes
Staff Writer

Nanakuli High School students toured Makua Valley, a training impact area used by Soldiers and Marines on Oahu Nov. 30.

The tour was part of the Army’s ongoing effort to show its work in the valley’s preservation and share information about cultural and environmental discoveries made there with the local community.

“The Army needs Makua Valley in order to properly train for its wartime mission, but we also recognize that Makua Valley holds a vast amount of cultural information that is important to the native Hawaiians, especially those on the Waianae coast,” said Michelle Cain, U.S. Army, Hawaii community relations officer.

One of the biggest community concerns is the preservation of ancient burial and ceremonial sites located in the valley. Even though the students weren’t taken to an actual burial site, they were allowed to visit an ancient housing area and ceremonial area. Here they were taught how the ancient Hawaiians lived and what they ate.

Students were able to participate in five different classes in the valley; rare plant preservation,



Spc. Charles Hayes

Carly Antone is an archeologist that works at Makua Valley. Antone gave a class on some of the archeological sites and discussed some of their findings with the students.

water test and studies, visit a cultural site where people once lived, discuss and learn about petroglyphs carved into sand stone, and a class on the Global Positioning System.

The students were surprised to find out that, as big as Makua Valley is, the impact area for

artillery rounds and the area that the Army trains in are relatively small. The Army makes sure that no training or ordnances goes near any burial sites.

“We want to work together with local schools in order to share the information the Army’s cultural and environmental programs have

discovered through their work in the valley.”

“The reservation, in use since World War II and is a key live-fire training facility to the military,” said Cain.

Another big concern for the locals is the water supply. Some believe that with all of the exploded ordinances out in the valley, some of the chemicals may be seeping into the ground water. Joel Narusawa, a hydrologist who tests the water in Makua demonstrated the techniques and made comparisons with the ground water that was pulled from an artesian well.

“When tested, the water’s acidic values were generally around 7, about the same as tap water,” said Narusawa.

An interview with some of the students back in their classroom turned into an all out class discussion on Dec. 2. The students seemed to be very pleased about the things that they learned at Makua Valley. Although enthusiastic and positive about their experiences, the students had some tips for the Army on how to make it better in the future.

“There should be more hiking,” said 13-year-old Kazeon Diaz. And others in the class expressed their desire to see more of the valley.

Military background on Makua Reservation

1869 - 1941
Most of the valley was leased to cattle ranchers.

1942 - 1943
U.S. Army confiscates 6,600 acres.

1964
Army returns 2,400 acres to state.

Present
4,190 acres leased to the Army until 2029.

Rick Jenkins, the students’ science teacher, was with a small group of community members who toured the valley a few months ago. He saw the tour as an opportunity for hands on education.

“We are looking forward to being able to do this again. I only took two classes this time, but I have four others that I would like to have the chance of taking as well,” said Jenkins.

Thieves are on the prowl - stay alert this holiday season

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

Holiday shoppers beware; the “Grinch” also known as the holiday crook is alive and well and looking for you this holiday season. Gift giving is a huge part of the holiday season and for criminals, it is a prime opportunity for gift taking.

Millions of Americans will flock to their local mall or shop online looking for the perfect gifts for their loved ones. Criminals will do the same, except their target is the unsuspecting shopper. In recent years, FBI statistics indicate that December is one of the top months for crime. Crimes cited include burglaries, robbery, car-break-ins, and other thefts.

Luckily for USARHAW residents, this particular statistic doesn’t follow mainland trends. According to Dennis Rocho, deputy provost marshal, United States Army Hawaii, “USARHAW crime statistics show December crime to be no higher than any other month, and in many cases it is actually less than in other months.”

December’s USARHAW statistics indicate the most common reported crime is theft of personal property from vehicles. Also, shoplifting from military exchanges tends to increase slightly.

Before you breathe a big sigh of relief and let your guard down, Rocho said, “The crimes we see committed are crimes of opportunity. It is up to you to

take away the thieves’ opportunity to make you a victim.”

He added, “The holidays are a time when busy people sometimes become careless, and that’s when they are especially vulnerable to theft and other crimes.” Prior planning, caution, and a little common sense go a long way towards protecting the holiday shopper, and most importantly, denying a potential thief the means to ruin your holiday.

To that end, numerous organizations, online and locally, annually compile safe shopping tips for holiday shoppers. And, while there is no guarantee that a Grinch won’t steal your holiday; at least, you will have made his job harder and lessened your chances of being his next unsuspecting victim.

Tips for smart shopping

Safety at the Mall

- When arriving at the mall, park in busy well-lit areas. Close car windows and lock all doors.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash, use checks or credit cards when possible.
- If your purse is grabbed by a thief, do not risk being hurt holding on to it. Let It Go!
- Do not carry too many packages, which would limit vision and mobility.
- Use ATMs in populated areas, and pay attention to what’s going on around you.
- Be aware that when you place gifts and purchases in your car that a thief maybe watching. It may be wiser to move your car to a new location if you plan more shopping.
- Shop with a friend.

Safety Online

- Shop on secure Web sites. When you provide payment information, the “http” at the beginning of the address bar should change to “https” or “shttp,” or look for an unbroken key, or padlock at the bottom of the browser window.
- Use a credit card, even better, use only one for all purchases.
- Get all details before you buy: a complete description; total price, including shipping; delivery time; warranty information; return policy; and what to do if you have problems.
- Print and file the information in case you need proof later.
- Online vendors do not need your Social Security or driver’s license numbers.

(Editor’s Note: Joy Boisselle compiled tips from the USARHAW PMO as well as online resources, including the National Consumers League.)



Ohana Day

A SIGN OF STRONG SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION



Dazhaun Walton eats strawberry ice cream during the Ohana Day party at Wheeler Army Air Field. His dad, Staff Sgt. Andrew Walton, is deployed to Iraq with HHS 211. Dazhaun's mother Yolanda said, "We just keep going," and enjoyed the free entertainment with her children.



While the teens were attracted to the inflatables and helicopters on display, the youngest in the military family enjoyed the balloon forming. Tehana Fethal wears a pink balloon hat and matching duck.



Mystro Fethal enjoyed a free lunch during Ohana Day. His sister Leia Ngirmidal is currently deployed to Iraq with the Army Reserve 411th Engineers.

Story and photos by
Rafi Grant
Contributing Writer

An appreciation day for deployed and deploying Soldiers and their families took place on Wheeler Army Air Field Dec. 11.

For the second time, Ohana Day was a sign of strong support for the troops and the families they leave behind, but also a day of fun and fellowship.

Families from Hawaii and the mainland, kindergarten kids from Wahiawa and high school students from Honolulu, a stay-at-home mom and a civilian employee are only a sampling of who attended the party at Wheeler's National Guard hangar.

What these different people had in common was a special connection to the military: a personal relationship in the form of family ties or a bond in form of deep appreciation and thankfulness.

"We want to remember the Soldiers today as well as their families who fight their emotional battle on the home front," Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle said. "Especially during the difficult time of the holidays," she continued.

To the music of the Air Force Band of the Pacific, the families enjoyed a free lunch, a variety of entertainment, but above all, the fellowship among the members of the military family.

"It is a nice way to meet other families who experience what we are going through," Master Serg. Quizon pointed out, whose niece is currently training at Fort Bliss, Texas with the 29th Brigade Combat Team for her deployment to Iraq at the beginning of 2005.

Along with hot dogs and Christmas cookies, Xavier Fethal enjoyed fellowship and the feeling of physical and mental support, while his children had



Regina Dracic explores the helicopter displayed at Wheeler Army Air Field. She was excited about spending a fun-filled Ohana Day with a friend whose dad is currently serving in Afghanistan.

fun with games.

Fethal's stepdaughter deployed to Iraq with the Army Reserve 411th Engineer Battalion in March and he admitted the deployment is hard on the family. "But meeting other families helps," he said.

Nearly 15,000 Soldiers with Hawaii ties are currently deployed or deploying in the near future: Soldiers from the Army, the Marine Corps, the Air Force, the Navy and the National Guard. And they all leave a family behind.

"The military and the Guard is a big Ohana, a big family," Lingle said, and

Ame Frey agreed.

Frey, wife of a Marine serving in Iraq, felt "a strong bond with all the Soldiers and their families. I know what it is like to have a loved one deployed," she said.

"This was the drive behind my efforts to help the Guard members of the 29th (BCT) to come home for Christmas," Frey continued after Lingle recognized her for efforts to bring 74 Soldiers home for the holidays.

The organizers of Ohana Day also offered a variety of games and activities for the youngest of the military community. Children could choose from ring tossing, face painting, and button making, among others, to escape reality for a little while.

"My daddy has retired already, but my friend's dad is deployed to Afghanistan and I am spending a fun day with her," Regina Dracic said as she explored one of the displayed heli-

copters outside the hangar.

The Ohana Day was made possible by the help and dedication of numerous volunteers.

"It is a chance for me to give something back to the military community," Joneli Joshua said, who volunteered at the food stand.

"We want to show our appreciation and support to the families whose Soldiers fight on behalf of all of us," added Lilian Koller, director of the Department of Human Services.

"It is hard for us to imagine what families and their Soldiers are going through," Lingle said, "but we want to help families in every way we can."

Ohana Day was one way to show the military community how much their sacrifices are appreciated and "We leave the party with a feeling of warmth, a feeling we will pass on to our Leia in Iraq," Fethal said of his stepdaughter.



A line of volunteers eagerly wait to serve attendees from an assortment of hotdogs, burgers, chips, cookies and more. Ohana Day was made possible by the helping hands of hundreds of volunteers who were in charge of distributing food and overseeing the games outside the hangar.



Sgt. Smith Theater

Today Ray 7 p.m. (R)
Saturday Dec. 18 The Incredibles 2 p.m. (PG)
Saturday Dec. 18 The Incredibles 7 p.m. (PG)
Sunday Dec. 19 Alfie 7 p.m. (R)
Monday Dec. 22 Closed
Tuesday Dec. 21 Closed
Wednesday Dec. 22 Closed
Thursday Dec. 23 Closed
Hickam AFB Movie Schedule
Today Saw 7 p.m. (R)
Saturday Dec. 18 The Polar Express 2 p.m. (G)
Saturday Dec. 18 SAW 7 p.m. (R)
Sunday Dec. 19 The Polar Express 2 p.m. (G)
Sunday Dec. 19 SAW 7 p.m. (R)
Monday Dec. 20 Closed
Tuesday Dec. 21 Closed
Wednesday Dec. 22 After The Sunset 7 p.m. (PG13)
Thursday Dec. 23 After The Sunset 7 p.m. (PG13)

Free USS Arizona Tour – This narrated two-hour tour on Jan. 11 includes a visit to the boathouse museum and a movie on the attack at Pearl Harbor. A boat tour following includes a tour around Ford Island and a stop at the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial. No children under 8 and other restrictions may apply. Tour departs from the Schofield Barracks Commissary parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Deadline to register is Jan. 4. Reservations will be accepted after this date if seats are available. Call 655-0111 or 655-0112 for information.

Mommy and Me Ceramic Painting – Participate in a craft project with your child on Jan. 7, 10 a.m. – noon. at the Schofield Barracks Arts and Crafts Center. The cost is \$15 and includes one large ceramic tile and one small piece. Additional children are \$5 each. Register by Jan. 6 by calling 655-4202.

Baby Sitting Classes – A SuperSitter course will be offered on Jan. 4, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Also offered is a CPR and Standard First Aid (SFA) class on Jan. 5, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Both classes are at Ka’ala Community Center on Schofield Barracks, building

Commentary

THE CHOPPIN' BLOCK

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly

CHOP - CHOP - CHOP!!! Heere's Johnny! Hello kiddies! I'm back, and it's time to dust off my old mighty axe and get back to swingin'.

In my latest installment comes an exceptional film, "Finding Neverland," starring Johnny Depp as J.B. Barrie, the prosperous Scottish play-writer who wrote "Peter Pan." As one may observe by the film title, the movie is primarily based upon Barrie's inspiration to write "Peter Pan."

Barrie, who is married, falls in love with widow Llewleyn Davies (Kate Winslet) and her four fatherless boys. Through experiences like flying kites in the park and playing pirates with the boys, Barrie is inspired and creates a masterpiece, naming his lead character after one of the Davies boys - Peter.

"Finding Neverland"

★★★★★

This movie was outstanding! It had remarkable performances from all actors, and I wouldn't be surprised if Depp doesn't get another Oscar nomination ("Pirates of the Caribbean") this year. One warning: This movie is an adult drama. When I say drama, I mean the kind where you may experience tears, or as some tough guys might say, "I got a lump in my throat."

This movie, to me, was perfect. The drama is very real in the way it isn't over-dramatized, and is very close to reality despite its imagination-filled main character.

If you see "Finding Neverland," I guarantee you will never look at "Peter Pan" the same again. Go check it out!

I give this spectacular film five out of five stars.

556. Classes are open to 13 to 17 year olds. Teens must complete the SuperSitter course in order to take the CPR and SFA classes. All classes are free, but spaces are limited. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis. Teens must be CYS members and bring a bag lunch to both classes. Registration is continuous. Call 655-5314 for information.

Dance Classes – Coming in January to Aliamanu Military Reservation and Schofield Barracks are the following classes: keiki combination dance classes, including tap, creative movement and tumbling for ages 3 to 5, combination tap, ballet, jazz and tumbling for ages 6 to 9, hip hop for children 10 and up, and hula for ages 5 to 18. Parents of registered CYS children are welcome to enroll. Classes are \$33 per month or \$99 for the January through March semester. Call 655-5314 or 833-5393 for information.

Information, Ticketing and Registration Grand Opening – The Schofield Barracks Information, Ticketing and Registration office is now located at the Flagview Mall. Join us for a celebration Friday, 9 a.m. – noon for cake and punch. Prizes winners announced at noon and need not be present to win. The office is open seven days a week, Mon – Fri, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., closed on holidays. Online information is available at www.mwrarmyhawaii.com.

Spouse's Night Out – A free ACS adults-only program at Schofield Barracks designed to get spouses out of the house every Thursday night from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. for fun and activities. Dec. 30, participate in "Rubber Stamping," "Create

Your Own Family Web Page" and "Quilting," bring supplies for table top Christmas tree. Call for details. MWR Blue Star Card holders receive free child care from 6 – 9 p.m. by reservation at Peterson Child Care Center. Call 655-3929 by noon of the Tuesday before each Thursday event to make child care reservations. Child care reservations can be made two weeks in advance. Pre-registration for classes required, call 655-2736.

Vehicle Safety Inspections – Bring your car to the MWR Auto Craft Center from the first to the 15th of the month and receive \$2 off the normal price of a vehicle inspection. Non-Tinted Windows, \$10, Tinted Windows, \$15. Call Fort Shafter at 438-9402 or Schofield Barracks at 655-9368.

Parent's Night Out – Jan. 15, 6 – 11 p.m., drop off the kids at Child and Youth Services and enjoy an evening out. If your child is not registered with CYS, a \$15 registration fee applies. Parent's Night Out fees are for E-5 and below, \$15 for one child and \$5 each additional child, for E-6 and above, \$20 for one child and \$5 for each additional child. Reservations are first come, first serve. Call the Registration and Referral office for information at Schofield Barracks, 655-5314 or Aliamanu Military Reservation, 833-5393.

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers – BOSS needs many volunteers this month for the Pro Bowl and Sony Open events. Pro Bowl volunteers must be able to be released from their duty for a two-week time. The Sony Open requires a one week commitment. For information, call 655-8169 or 655-1130.

Holiday Lunch Buffet – Dine on turkey, ham, all-American stuffing, cranberry sauce and more at Reggie's, today, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Cost is \$8.95 per person. Call 655-0660.

Breakfast with Santa – Have a breakfast buffet of pancakes, eggs, sausage, juice, and coffee with Santa on Saturday, starts 10 a.m. at the Tropics on Schofield Barracks. Cost is \$5 for ages 9 and up and \$3 for ages 8 and under. Have a picture taken with Santa for \$3. Register your child today and receive a special gift from Santa. Call 655-5697 or 655-5698.

Army Holiday Celebration – Single Soldiers and Army families are invited to enjoy a free turkey dinner with all the fixings, spades, free throw basketball, 9-ball tournaments, a visit with Santa, Karaoke contest with a \$100 first place prize,

door prizes, train rides and more at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks on Dec. 24, 4 – 8 p.m. Enter to win the Grand Prize of a neighbor island trip with lodging at Kilauea Military Camp for two nights with air for two people. Presents will be distributed to all single Soldiers. Santa will also have presents for registered family members under the age of 18. Registration will be open until 4 p.m. Dec. 22. For a schedule of events and to register, visit the MWR Web site at www.mwrarmyhawaii.com or call 655-0111, 655-0112.

Food Donations and Volunteers Needed – Food donations (desserts) for the Army Holiday Celebration are needed and can be dropped off between 3 – 4 p.m. at the Tropics on Schofield Barracks. Late donations will be accepted. Volunteer servers and turkey roasters are also needed. Call 655-0111 or 655-0112 for information.

Kalakaua Pro Shop Sale and Course Closure – Major deals and discounts at the Kalakaua Golf Pro Shop until Dec. 31, when the course closes. Look for information about Kalakaua II in 2005. Call 655-9833.

Looking for that perfect gift? – MWR has many ideas for that special someone. The Tropics, building 589, Schofield Barracks, has Tropic Lightning Travel Mugs or Tropic Lightning Coffee. Call 655-0002 for more information. At Information, Ticketing, and Registration, purchase the 2005 Entertainment book for \$30. Call Schofield Barracks ITR at 655-9971 or Fort Shafter ITR at 438-1985. Can't make a choice? Purchase a gift certificate at any MWR facility.

Army Mini-Sports Baseball Program Registration – Register your child, born in 2000 or 2001, at any Youth Sports Office to learn baseball fundamentals until Dec. 28. Cost is \$10 and includes a T-shirt. Programs conducted at Bennett Youth Center Field and Aliamanu Baseball Fields, and run from Jan. 4 - Feb. 24. Call the nearest Youth Sports Office.

MWR Holiday Hours – The Child and Youth Services Branch will close on Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1 and 2. The Schofield Barracks and Aliamanu Teen Centers will be open on Jan. 1 from 1 – 8 p.m. All Community Recreation Division facilities will close on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1, except for the Pet Kennel, which will be open on those dates from 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. MWR facilities may change or alter hours during the holiday season. Contact the specific facility for more information.

Puppeteer sing-along at post libraries

1st Lt. Kimberly Luft
17th CSB
Contributing Writer

Christy Lipps, a popular puppeteer traveled around to military posts spreading her unique holiday cheer to children Dec. 7-9. Her performances were held at Fort Shafter, Sgt. Yano Library, Schofield Barracks, and Aliamanu Libraries.

“We set these programs up to support the community and encourage people to come into the library. Odds are they will leave happy,” said Janet Howard, Public Services Librarian for the Sgt. Yano Library.

Children of all ages came out to see the masterful puppets and have an opportunity to sing along with Lipps. Close to 200 children participated from all three libraries, with one of the youngest only 5-weeks-old. Jaime Overson brought her 8-month-old daughter, Rhylee, because she loves music.

“We wanted to listen to Christmas songs and get out of the house,” said Overson. Christmas songs and entertainment is exactly what everyone got during the interactive performance.

Lipps, decked out in Christmas tree apron with flashing-lights ornaments, asked for volunteers from her group at Schofield

Barracks. She needed amateur puppeteers to help her out with the show.

Everyone then sang 10 little angels, promising that they would be angels for the rest of the day for their parents.

Imaginations grew as Lipps took the children on adventures to the North Pole. She also had them in Mrs. Claus’ kitchen cooking up Christmas treats. They had to clean up afterwards, of course.

One of the highlights of the show was the performance of the 12 days of Christmas, Hawaii-style. Twelve participants were chosen from the group and they donned fabric over shirts depicting the different days. The children were prompted to turn around on their cue and everyone sing out the number and item on the shirt. Examples were nine pounds of poi on the ninth day and on the sixth day, six hula lessons.

“There was very good audience participation, really getting the children and parents in the holiday spirit. The children and adults loved it,” said Russ Park, retired Army Col., as he attended the Fort Shafter Library performance. Other people had another motivation to attend.

“Because my husband is deployed, it keeps the kids busy and gives us something to do. My



1st Lt. Kim Luft

Shelby Filipkowski gives the Santa puppet a big hug at the end of the Christmas Sing-Along performance by Christy Lipps.

Panel makes veterans aware of health benefits

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

ORLANDO, Fla. – Help is only as far away as a local Department of Veterans Affairs office.

That was the message from a panel discussing VA health benefits and services with disabled veterans and their families at the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes: 1st Annual Road to Recovery Tribute and Conference here today.

The first step, Margaret Russell from the Orlando VA Healthcare Center said, is simply making sure that veterans know that the VA exists and it exists for them. “Recently ... I had a veteran come into my office,” Russell said. “And he said to me, ‘I came back seven months ago. I had no idea the VA was here for me.’”

He said he was explaining to a friend that he was running out of a medication and that he couldn’t afford to refill it, Russell recalled. The friend reminded him that he was a veteran and suggested he go to the VA.

He did go to the VA in Orlando, Russell said, and he

was walked through the eligibility process. Immediately afterward, he was seen by a doctor and left with his prescription in hand.

Making sure vets know that the VA is there and that they are eligible for benefits is only half the battle. Community is an important step in tying the home front to the warfront.

“Our goal is to sensitize the community and educate them as to what the post-war adjustment problems are so they can be sensitive to your needs,” Bill Sautner, from the Orlando Vet Center told the disabled veterans. “We realize that combat is a life-transforming experience. At the Vet Center, we’re there for you when you’re ready to begin talking about some of those experiences and trying to resolve them.”

While reaching out is essential, getting veterans into the system is the goal. The VA has developed a “Seamless Transition” system of care, Brook Edgeman of the VA Seamless Transition Effort, said.

The system provides points of contact in all 163 VA facilities throughout the

nation. Those contacts are there to answer questions, help veterans make the right contacts so they can get efficient answers to their questions and help them cut through and red tape they might encounter. They also exist to make sure that the veterans know what health benefits they are eligible for.

Sometimes the task is as basic as helping reservists or guardsmen realize they are veterans too.

“I can’t tell you how many times I run into Reserve and Guard individuals ... and they tell me, ‘I’m Reserve. I’m not a veteran. I don’t have the same benefits as somebody who’s active

duty,’” said Mark Brown, VA’s director of environmental agents services. “That’s not true.” Reservists and guardsmen have the access to benefits as anyone who ever has been activated, he said.

Those benefits include programs to meet the many varying needs of veterans, especially those returning from combat. The benefits cover everything from readjustment and vocational rehabilitation programs to substance abuse and sexual trauma programs and programs to handle post-deployment stress and post- trauma

stress disorder. One such benefit is a program that offers free health care with no co-pays for two years after separation if a veteran has served in a combat zone, no questions asked. It’s called “Special VA Health Care Eligibility for Veterans Who Serve In Combat Theaters.”

This program was a shocker for Marine 1st Lt. Dustin Ferrell attached to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.

He said “the two-year thing,” really stood out as something that would be

daughter has been looking forward to this since I got the flier. She even marked off the days on the calendar,” said Danice Filipkowski, who attended the show with her 3-year-old daughter, Shelby.

There were special visits from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, a snowman, and a bunny. All of which held the children’s rapt attention as the puppets spoke and moved with Lipps’ animation.

The almost life-sized Santa puppet is new to Lipps’ act and she uses him as the grand finale. The kids get a chance to shake his hand or give Santa a big hug.

Parents also lined up to take choice pictures of their children with the enormous puppet. As for Lipps, she waited patiently as the children filed through. Another show is complete and another crowd is satisfied. The children then say good bye and thank you to Lipps as they are escorted out of the library.

“No two shows are ever alike. The children always surprise me,” Lipps said. There is no other way she would rather have it.

For more information on events hosted by the surrounding military libraries, call 438-9521 for Fort Shafter, 655-8002 for Sgt. Yano Library, and 833-4851 for the Aliamanu Library.

very important to him as he is waiting to be medically retired. He was wounded south of Nasiriyah, Iraq.

“I think there are a lot of programs out there, but people aren’t aware of them,” Ferrell said. “I’m DoD. I’ve gone through some of those processes, so I knew some of the information.”

(Editor’s Note: For more information about veterans benefits call Veterans Affairs at 433-1000 between 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. or walk-in before 3 p.m. VA is located at Tripler Army Medical Center, E Wing.)

USARHAW
Christmas
services

Main Post Chapel,
Schofield Barracks

Dec. 24
5 p.m. – Catholic
Christmas Eve Mass
6:30 p.m. – Protestant
Christmas Eve Service
Dec. 31
10 p.m. – Gospel
“Watch Night Service”
Jan. 2
10:30 a.m. – Catholic
Mass

AMR Chapel

Dec. 19
9:45 a.m., 12:15 p.m. –
“Star of Bethlehem”
Christmas Program
Dec. 24
5 p.m. – Catholic
Christmas Eve Mass
7:30 p.m. – Protestant
Christmas Eve Service
Jan. 2
9:45 a.m., 12:15 p.m. –
Covenant Players

Fort DeRussy
Chapel

Dec. 24
5 p.m. – Protestant
Candlelight Service
7:30 p.m. – Catholic
Christmas Eve Mass
Dec. 26
5 p.m. – Catholic
Mass
(No Saturday Mass on
Christmas Day)
Dec. 31
9 p.m. – Gospel
Watchnight Service

Soldiers’ Chapel
Schofield Barracks

Dec. 24
7 p.m. – Liturgical
Protestant Service
Dec. 31
11:45 a.m. – Adoration
Mass
Jan. 1
11:45 a.m. – Adoration
Mass

TAMC Chapel
Tripler Army
Medical Center

Dec. 24
5 p.m. – Catholic
Children’s Mass
7 p.m. – Protestant
Candlelight Service
11 p.m. – Catholic
Festival Carols Mass
Dec. 25
10 a.m. – Catholic
Christmas Mass
Jan. 1
10 a.m. – Catholic
New Year’s Mass

Wheeler Chapel
Wheeler Army Air
Field

Dec. 24
7 p.m. – Candlelight
Service
Dec. 25
(No Vigil Mass for
Sunday)
Jan. 1
5 p.m. – Catholic
Mass
Call the main post
chapel 655-9355,

Commentary

Spouses left behind have
a lot to be proud about

By Nadja Gassert-Depape
Contributing Writer

This is the time of year when we’re supposed to look back to note accomplishments and ahead to plan an improved future.

Disappointment overshadows this holiday season because loved ones are not returning from Iraq or Afghanistan as initially expected. As your plans for a reunion are postponed, looking back over the last few months, spent without the Soldier in your life, may be the last thing on your mind.

But go ahead, look anyway.
Eve Ramos, whose husband recently returned from Iraq, quit her full-time job while he was gone to be mother and father to their kids. That didn’t keep her out of the classroom, though. “It makes me very proud to be a part of my students’ lives and to help them accomplish their goals,” Ramos said. She loves being a teacher.

Olivia Neason also enjoys teaching. She attended training for the Tropic Lightning Academy, which is a program designed to help Soldiers ease back into life at home and reunite with their families. “It’s my way of giving back to the community. I am very interested in helping spouses and Soldiers reintegrate,” she said. Her husband is in Afghanistan.

Kathy Jollit whose husband is in Iraq always wanted to instruct, but never found the opportunity until this last summer. “I am one of the spouses who returned to the mainland,” she said. “I gave up my regular job and went home to the Gulf Coast. I became a camp instructor, which is something I had always wanted to be, but it never fit in with my regular career.”

While no one wishes for deployment, it is a good opportunity for some spouses to do something different and revisit old goals and dreams just like Jollit, who had the chance to fulfill a lifelong wish.

Kelly Kaldahl took the opportunity her husband’s deployment to Iraq provided to travel and visited Europe with friends. “Plus, I took a job that required inter-island travel. Not something I would have done with him here,” she admitted.

“I was able to work at two very different jobs,” said Bridget Hall whose husband had to deploy to Iraq. “I worked with girls living in a residential setting right here on the island, and I worked in the NBC tower in downtown Chicago.” Two things she might not have done with her husband by her side.

Managing life without her husband is also something Tara Lobaina did. While he is in Afghanistan, she worked on her Master’s degree and ended up switching schools. “It was difficult to do without his support. I felt very uncomfortable,” she said. “But I was



very motivated to see it through, partly because I didn’t want to bother him with my problems over the phone.”

Lobaina who works for the Joint Military Family Abuse Shelter had just arrived on Hawaii with her husband when he deployed. “When we got the news about his deployment, we concentrated on our time together and didn’t go out to make friends. So when he left, I was very new to the island and barely knew anyone. I had to become a lot more outgoing than I usually am.” She did great.

Successfully navigating life without your Soldier just might mean you need to stay busy.

Lobaina participated in The Race for the Cure. Bridget Hall took up yoga, Pilates and knitting. “The knitting thing didn’t work out too well, but I am proud of the fact that I attempted something I might not have with my husband at home,” she said.

Raphaela Grant traveled to the big island to participate in a triathlon event – think Ironman – which took her more than six hours to finish. “The speed and strength training I had to do in the first few months after deployment helped to keep busy,” she admitted. “It gave me something to do and kept my mind off things.”

Grant kept very busy. She studied for her third Master’s degree, volunteered at city hall, worked for a fashion business and started writing for Hawaii Army Weekly. She also let her hair grow out. Months before his deployment to Afghanistan, her then fiancé promised to return safely if she’d let her short hair grow out. She hasn’t had a cut since her husband left.

“The bottom line, life didn’t stop. It got busier,” commented Kara Anderson. Her husband isn’t deployed at the moment, but she is no stranger to deployment. “We pick up the slack. And we rely on each other, family members and friends. We manage.”

You managed, too.
Your Soldier isn’t the only hero in your family. Chances are, you are stronger than you thought in the beginning of the year. And when you take the time to look back, you’ll realize you’ve not only overcome challenges and encountered your fair share of problems, you’ve managed. You’ve grown. You need to be proud of yourself, military spouse.

(Jan. 7: Learn how other spouses coped and even thrived during their spouse’s deployment.)

Commentary

Prescription for
reunion – avoiding
sharks (part 4 of 4)

By Michele Adams-
Thompson
Contributing Writer

Here in Hawaii we have some of the world’s best beaches and waters. Some of those waters are occasionally visited by sharks. We watch for them and by avoiding them, we enjoy these beautiful waters on a regular basis.

We’ve been comparing reunion to shark infested waters with a view to managing it in a similar way. Reunion is simply not without its difficulties but identifying and planning for them is important to fully enjoying reunion.

Understanding some of what reunion “looks like” is one way of doing that. We know a lot about what to expect because the many military families that have been going through numerous and long deployments have been talking to the researchers about what it’s like and how it’s gone for them.

Some trends have surfaced and this is the information important to those of us here in the 25th Infantry Division (Light).

There’s a honeymoon stage in the first weeks or month the Soldier is home, but beyond that there appears to be a time where we can expect some conflict.

The good news is this is part of what’s normal and if you know that, you can be ready for how to get through it in healthy ways. Expectations can help us or unhinge us, depending on if we keep them realistic or not.

So your Soldier is home and the honeymoon seems to be dulling a bit. What now? The prescription for this time is to take things slowly, determine to be patient about communicat-

ing with your Soldier, along with keeping those expectations realistic.

We’re humans, not machines; this is what keeps us growing, learning and adapting to what comes our way. So everyone has changed in a year’s time and this is a good thing. Your Soldier has not been on a camping trip, he or she’s been in a battlefield and most of us can’t really fully grasp that.

We haven’t been on vacations, we’ve been managing daily life and all the good and the bad that has visited us in the process. Our Soldier probably can’t completely relate to that either. These are just some of the dynamics that make the post-honeymoon phase what it is.

Your Soldier will be attending Tropic Lightning Academy when he or she returns from block leave after homecoming. Part of the reason they will be going to the classes at that time is that the honeymoon may be fading about then and our leadership realizes that this is a very good time to provide all of us help for getting through reunion and its challenges.

It’s not a one-size-fits-all program. The program offers certain content to all our Soldiers but then breaks them out in order to offer the most helpful content to those who are married or single or single-parents, etc.

Any military spouse is welcome and encouraged to attend for free. To register for a class in Tropic Lightning Academy, call the administration office at 655-8382. For more information on reunion, Army Community Service is a constant helping resource for all of us. You can reach them at 655-2400.

Share holiday season with homeless veterans

By Kirsten Tacker
Contributing Writer

Tonight 500,000 American homeless veterans will go to sleep on the streets as we slip into our cozy beds. A third of these served in a war zone and the number of homeless Vietnam-era veterans is greater than the total number of service members who died.

Many are homeless due to financial hardship, mental and emotional illness, substance abuse, and additional circumstances that have kept them from regaining the life they once lived.

In Hawaii, United States Veterans Initiative, better known as U.S. VETS, a non-profit national organization now provides housing and employment assistance to veterans at Barber’s Point.

“We literally take a veteran off the street and commit to work at where they are at,” said Darryl Vincent, site director, about the organization’s therapeutic approach to rehabilitation.

“They can come with just the shirt on their back; U.S. VETS takes care of everything else. We provide food, shelter, water, and clothing,” Vincent declared.

“We have three buildings and two are transitional housing for the very independent resident with case management. The other building houses the Veterans In Progress program which is a rigorous 90-day back to work program for residents who cannot come and go at will,” Gretchen Nelson, program coordinator shared. “You

have to be (veterans affairs) eligible to be here and the theme of the program is to get the vet to work if it is appropriate for the individual. We help them find a job and show them how to keep it, so they can save money to move out on their own,” Vincent said.

U.S. VETS does this through programs like the VIP and AmeriCorps program, which provide outreach, case management, career guidance – and anyone can be a member.

“The AmeriCorps program is fantastic. This has more direct services like a domestic Peace Corps. This program extends beyond homeless veterans to anyone homeless,” said Nelson.

“This program requires 1,700 hours worth of volunteer service that upon completion awards you an education certificate and a living stipend,” he said.

Soft-spoken Myron Lathan said, “This program works. I’ve been through five other programs and a correctional facility.” Lathan, a former homeless Navy veteran, is now the night coordinator.

“This program will help you get your life back together. If you even have an ounce of sincerity to want to make your life better you can here,” Lathan asserted.

“Our first goal is to create stability for the resident before they get involved in work force development or a career program,” explained Nelson.

The organization tries to hire within so vets have a job.



Spc. Daniel P. Kelly

Marko Johnson, left, and Myron Lathan laugh as they finish a Christmas tree on the lanai-deck of the U.S. VETS home in Barbers Point Monday.

Lathan the first hired veteran shared his story, “I started [my Navy career] in cryptology at the Naval Security Group. Afterwards I went into the National Security Agency at Fort Meade for six years.

I left the government because of drug use and went back to Guam where I had done most of my earlier work and was a private investigator for five years.

“Here I have more stability, I cleared up all my legal problems and got a job,” Lathan concluded.

Marko Johnson, the facility a.m. coordinator and former homeless navy veteran agreed, “That this program does not have holes in it like

the others do everything along the way is about gaining life skills. It doesn’t drop you anywhere.”

“I joined the Navy at 21 as an Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Handler and ended my career being dropped to an E3 because of fighting and coming in late,” said Johnson.

Opportunities are available this holiday or any day to assist the veterans.

“We always need help around the holidays to serve meals. A group can come in with a chili dinner, sing carols or whatever. We also encourage volunteers to teach classes in the career center to help with life skills either one time or on

a consistent basis,” Nelson said.

Donated items are also encouraged.

“We can always use employment related clothing, his and her toiletry kits, hygiene items, anything and everything for cleaning, paper towels and toilet paper,” Nelson added.

“Supermarket gift cards or a card directly used for basic necessities. This donation properly is going to and the staff takes care of the purchases,” Nelson said, and concluded.

“The best gift on earth is the gift of time and it costs nothing,” she said.

Call 682-9000 for more information.

Army smashes Air Force in Turkey Bowl games

Sgt. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq – Just as turkey and stuffing are traditional items for Thanksgiving, so is football.

That is the reason, Soldiers and Airmen gathered on this holiday to go head-to-head in men's and women's flag football games known as the Turkey Bowl.

Army and Air Force women played against another in the first game.

On the first play of the game, Johanna Fleming, a military policeman with the 25th MP Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, returned the kickoff for a touchdown and gave the Army team a 8-0 lead after the successful two-point conversion.

The first offensive possession for the Air Force ended up being a sack for negative yards, then an interception by Fleming, who dashed into the end zone for her second touchdown in a row. The rest of the first half didn't look favorable for the Air Force, as the Army team scored two more times to put them up by 30 points.

The second half was all Army again, as Fleming picked off two passes and scored three touchdowns. The Army women pounded the Air Force women, 56-0.

Following the women's game, the Army and Air Force men began their game in temperatures around the high 40s.

The Air Force team struck first, but failed the two-point conversion to put them up by six.

Army then scored on a touchdown reception and completed the two-point conversion.

The first half of the game was an offensive struggle, as both teams were only able to score once. At halftime, Army led 8-6.

In the second half, Edward Jackson, a clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 2nd BCT, caught a touchdown reception to lift Army to a 16-6 lead.

Air Force came right back with two consecutive touchdowns, but could not score on the two-point conversions. Air Force was now up 18-16.

With less than three minutes to play and Army's ball, a pass was thrown to Jackson in the end zone. Jackson leaped over two Air



Sgt. Sean Kimmons

Edward Jackson (black shirt), a clerk with HHC, 2nd Bde., jumps over two Air Force defenders to grab a touchdown reception during the men's Turkey Bowl on Kirkuk Air Base Nov. 25. The Army won, 32-24. For the women teams, the Army pounded the Air Force, 56-0.

Force defenders and caught his second touchdown reception of the game. After the two-point conversion, Army led 24-18.

After Jackson's touchdown catch, the energy from the Air Force team was drained. The Air Force was able to score again, but the Army offense counterattacked that score with one of their own.

The Army grounded the Air Force by the score of 32-24.

Success fuels talented teen

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

Fierce determination coupled with a focused competitive spirit are hallmarks of many successful people.

Taneka Stephens, 17, possesses these traits and many more.

A senior at Mililani High School, Stephens motivations are simple, "I like being busy and I want to succeed in life," she said.

Busy is an understatement, Stephens' weekdays begin with a full schedule of classes followed by after school activities and then, five or more hours of homework each night. Weekends are no less hectic, as she bowls on the Schofield Junior Bowling and the Schofield Junior Traveling Leagues.

Think Sunday is a day of rest? Think again. She works part-time as a hostess for a local restaurant. Interspersed throughout the week are various practices and performances that keep this teenager on the go.

It is no wonder when asked about her life's passions that Stephens answered with a laugh, "Sleep – when I get it."

Her successes are many. During the fall sports season, Stephens helped lead the Mililani Girls Bowling Team to a second place finish in the Hawaii State Bowling tournament held Nov. 12 in Kauai. Finishing the season with a 178 average, she also placed sixth individually in the state.

"I am most proud of this because our team was not expected to win and we entered as a wildcard. I was really proud of how the team bonded and worked together," she explained.

Other accomplishments include earning a 3.8 grade point average while taking several advanced placement courses, selections to the All-State Honor Choir, and as a soloist in her school's vocal ensemble. She also is a board member in the Association of Students at Mililani High School and serves as the school's historian.

When asking others to describe Stephens, all mention her positive outlook, her photo-ready smile, and her boundless energy. Lanny Quizon, her league bowling coach for three years, said, "Taneka is a great role model; she shows other kids how to enjoy the game and still be a strong competitor. She is always smiling, but that competitive side, though hidden, is always there."

Though her competitive side remains hidden, her future goals are anything but. Stephens has her future mapped according to what she calls "my life plan."



Joy Boisselle

With her trademark flower behind the ear, Taneka Stephens displays the picture perfect form.

First, she hopes to graduate as one of her school's valedictorians, attend college to pursue a psychology degree, and then work as a counselor, specifically targeting teenagers.

"I like helping people. Teens are going through very emotional times and parents and kids don't talk enough. These are crucial years and you've got to take time to help," she said wisely.

Also on her life plan is marriage and a family. "I know I want to be a mom and a loving wife; family is very important to me," she said.

Stephens' mother, Sue, said, "Whatever Taneka does, she does well. Being a military kid has made her stronger and has exposed her to many different kinds of people."

"I am proud I have been true to myself and I am my own person." She added, "I respect my parents and I want their respect. With respect, you have to give it to get it."

Her advice to other teens? "Don't give up. A positive attitude will keep you going even when things may not be going well," she said, "follow your heart and do it [achieve your goals] for yourself, not for anyone else."

With her priorities in place, this "Awesome Army Brat" is well on her way to fulfilling her life plan.

Commander’s Golf Scramble makes last ‘putts’ at Kalakaua

1st Lt. Lindsey Dane
Contributing Writer

Originally named the Schofield Barracks Association Golf Course, it was renamed Kalakaua Golf Course in 1949, after the Hawaii king who had once spent much of his time on the land.

That name and the course’s legacy have played a pivotal role in Schofield Barracks history, but as of Dec. 31 the course will close down – snack pro-shops and all – to make way for new Soldier housing.

The renovation and addition of new housing units for the growing 25th Infantry Division (Light) will improve quality of life for Soldiers and family members.

Even with the sense of loss for the well-known facility, the December Commander’s Golf Scramble still brought a fun relaxing afternoon to its participants.

Several veterans of the event came out for one last round, others for their first before the event has its last game on Schofield Barracks soil.

Damien Walker and his team from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry were among the first timer’s for the event.

“I don’t think they should tear down the golf course,” Walker said. “First take down the older housing. We do need housing, but this is history.”

“We were very motivated by this being the last one played here – we cried at the 18th hole!,” exclaimed Laura Christian with a laugh. “This is one of the oldest courses in the Army, put the new houses on Leilehua.”

Christian and her teammates made up the only all-female team in the tournament. They were also the only team of military spouses.

“I’m really going to miss having a golf course on Schofield Barracks, the camaraderie of it all, and having these events on payday,” said teammate Mini McKenna.

“It would be nice if more of the spouses got involved though. Its not just for serious, full-time golfers. Its just fun, McKenna added.

The winners for this month’s scramble left the team of the 45th Corps Support Group’s, James Baumgartner, Larry Webb, and Kevin O’Conner and Division Chemical’s Mark Nicholson as the defending champions two months in a row with a score of 61.

The winner for the longest drive was Kevin Scorola of the 2nd Bn. 27th Inf. Rgt. Rear Detachment on hole 9.

The winners of the closest to the pin competition was Louis Asher from HHC, Division on hole 8, Washington Migel from the G7 team on hole 2 and Scorola on hole 11.

Here’s a historical perspective on the course:

The year 1918 was a momentous time in space. That year, congress established time zones and approved daylight saving time.

1918 marked the end of WWI and the first regular U.S. airmail service commenced between New York and Washington, DC.

The Boston Red Sox were the world champions – it was also the last time they were the world champions.

This was also the year work



1st Lt. Lindsey Dane
Damien Walker, HHC 2-35 Inf. takes a swing during the Golf Scramble on Kalakaua Course Dec. 3.

began on the first holes of the Kalakaua Golf Course at Schofield Barracks.

It all began when some neighboring plantation owners agreed to help the Army build a golf course in the shadow of the Waianae Range and Kolekole Pass – providing the Army would maintain it.

Work continued for another eight years until in 1926 there were 18 holes for players to enjoy.

For those still hoping to get in on the Commander’s Golf

Scramble – it isn’t too late. The tradition will continue at the Leilehua Golf Course on payday activities beginning Jan. 7.

Tee off is at noon and individuals and three to four member team submissions should be dropped off to Staff Sgt. Christopher McKeown at G1 plans and operations section in Fernandez Hall, Schofield Barracks.

Include each person’s name, rank and unit on the application.

Army – Navy game renews old rivalries

Spc Francis Horton
CJTF-76 Public Affairs Bagram

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – With the holiday season in full swing, service members here must search for ways to keep their spirits up while serving in a combat zone.

Logistics Task Force 725 at Bagram Airfield kicked off their holiday festivities by organizing a party during the 105th match-up between the Army and Navy football teams.

1st Lt. Jennie Wunderlich, an LTF 725th headquarters platoon commander and West Point graduate, spearheaded the party.

Old rivalries were accompanied by a large spread of food and drinks provided by the LTF 725 MWR facility.

“During the holiday season, troops deployed away from their families need a stress reliever,” Wunderlich said. “We want to give the Soldiers something to celebrate.”

Before the game started, partygoers were given raffle tickets for door prizes to be awarded at the end of each quarter, an Army and Navy word find to complete, and a set of predictions for the game, such as who would win the coin toss and if the half time scores would be odd or even.

Bagram Airfield has a large Army population, but

one Navy veteran made a showing at the party to represent his service.

Turk Maggi, the state department political advisor to the Combined Joint Task Force 76 commander, was a helicopter pilot in the Navy for 20 years.

He learned of the party from Jennie’s husband, Capt. Ben Wunderlich, the Deputy Commanding General’s Aide.

“We have to win this year to even the scores up,” Maggi said.

Many other MWR facilities held parties for the game, but not many service members were willing to stay up for the entire game. The halftime show started at around one-thirty in the morning.

“It’s a late game,” Wunderlich said. “We’ll probably all lose some sleep if we stay up for the whole thing.”

Maj. Teresa Rae, the executive officer for LTF 725 and another West Point graduate, said that this is not the only event planned for the holiday season.

“We plan to go caroling on Christmas Eve,” she said.

Gift giving, Christmas movies and card and dart tournaments are planned for every weekend to keep Soldiers in the Christmas spirit.

“Being away from family and friends during the holidays is hard, but if we can spend time together, it’ll keep our spirits up,” Rae said.