

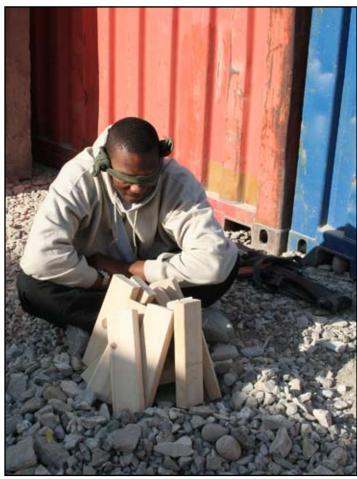


# Lightning News

News from the front for Soldiers, families and friends of HHC, 359th Signal Brigade



### HERE AT BAGRAM...



Photos by Army Spc. Jessica Jones

Above, Army Sgt. Alonzo Cook, human resources sergeant, tests his senses as part of the Amazing Race held in Bagram in November. Below, Army Spc. Darcelyn Kimbro, human resources system specialist, and Army Lt. Col. Teri Hassell, deputy task force commander, are pumped up and ready to go compete in the Amazing Race, which including a variety of tasks for the 4-member teams to complete.





Left, Army Sgt. Todd Tinker, **Enterprise** team chief. and Army Spc. Micheal Cannon, task force chaplain's assistant, mentally prep for the interesting challenges of the Amazing Race.



Above, Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Cynthia Thomas, Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Hinojos, Army Spc. Candid Surry, and Army Spc. Kamika Blakely all from the Joint NetOps Control Center form an Amazing Race team for the Task Force Thunder. The race included carrying sand bags, chanting, and a list of other interesting tasks.

Right, Army Sgt. Natanisha Hershberger, Joint NetOps Control Center supply sergeant, shows off her huge piece of cake from the Egyptian Hospital's farewell ceremony. Below, Army Spc. Courtney, Headquarters and Headquarters Company supply clerk, is all smiles as they do prep-work for redeployment.







Army Spc. Jessica Jones



Courtesy Photo

Left, Army Lt. Col.
Orville Jennings,
personnel officer in
charge, takes a break
and enjoys some
local food with the
Afghan art shop owners, which is at the
new Bagram Bizarre.



Army Spc. Jessica Jones



army Spc. Jessica Jones

Above, the Enterprise section takes a break from the office with a little basketball action. Left, Army Sgt. Maj. John Schiffli, plans and operations sergeant major, reads a birthday card while he tries out his new birthday Gator Snuggie. A number of Soldiers from the company surprised Schiffli with a little party and well wishes.

### Brigade Highlights:

### Headquarter & Headquarters Section



The Headquarters and Headquarters Company Section ~ From left to right, Army: 1st Sgt. Carolyn Suazo, Spc. Thomas Robinson, Sgt. Tristan Hughel, Spc. Courtney Simmons, Staff Sgt. Eric Pope, Spc. Courtesia Wilson, Sgt. Chelsea Helsley, Sgt. Shauna Phillips, and Capt. Gervis Carlisle. Personnel on leave and not pictured: 1st Sgt. Ricardo Pastrana and Spc. Jessica Jones.

The mission of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company section is to provide command, control and supervision of the tactical operations of the brigade and its attached units. We provide unit administration, training and logistical support for the brigade staff sections and HHC personnel.

By supporting the Soldiers assigned to HHC, we facilitate an enviornment in which they can operate and in turn support the brigade commander in his mission.

Army Capt. Gervis Carlisle, commander ~ The University of Georgia graduate recieved his commission as a signal officer in 2004. He has been in the Army for over 11 years, and currently resides in Powder Srings, Ga. This is the second deployment for Carlise.

**Army Spc. Courntey Simmons,** supply clerk Simmons hails from Aiken, S.C. As the HHC supply clerk her responsibilities include: inventory, maintanence of unit records, the ordering and issuing of supplies, as well as receiving weapons from traveling Soldiers.

Army Sgt. Tristan Hughel, brigade food service sergeant ~ The Arlington, Texas resident was cross-leveled to the 359th from the 820th Signal Company, and has been in the Reserves for over eight years. Currently, Hughel is a student at Tarrant County College, and plans to attend The University of Texas at Arlington to major in software engineering. He believes that fairness, understanding and a willingness to listen make a great leader.

Army Sgt. Chelsea Helsley, training sergeant ~ Helsley was raised in Columbia, S.C. She was assigned to the brigade in February 2005. Helsley has bachelors degree in chemistry from University of South Carolina. Her goal while deployed is to learn a new language.

### Christmas Around the World is about Family

Different Craditions, but The Same Pelebration

Dear 359th TTSB friends and family,

Greetings wonderful families of the 359th TTSB!

Wishing you a Merry Christmas is the order of the day for us over here! Not sure when this newsletter will get to you but I hope and pray it is a bright and cheery celebratory time for all.

My favorite Christmas memory was waking up very early on Christmas morning and sneaking down to the living room where lo and behold there were six brand new Schwinn bicycles. I have seven siblings, and that year must have been a pretty good year for my dad's business, because we all had a pretty huge haul that day. I still remember all the wrapping paper all over the floor that morning. My dad worked us pretty hard, but he and mom sure gave a bunch at Christmas! We would follow that up by going to Worship at around 10 a.m., and then we came home to a big Christmas meal with lots of ham and all the fix'ns. The only bad part of the day was sometimes having to wash or dry the dishes.

I found some interesting Christmas or holiday traditions that other countries experience each year; which one do you like?

The Netherlands: The Dutch call the jolly old man Sinterklaas. But, he is anything but jolly, and is actually quite in shape. On December 5, Sinterklaas travels into a town in the Netherlands on a boat from Spain. He travels with his servant Zwarte Piet (Black Peter) and upon arrival, rides a white horse through the town. Dutch children are warned that Zwarte Piet keeps a record of all the things they have done in the past year and that good children will get presents, but bad children will get chased by Zwarte Piet with a stick and will be taken to Spain! On December 24, Christmas Eve for Americans, they believe Santa Claus (Christmas man) comes from Lapland, Finland to deliver even more presents.

Portugal: Christmas in Portugal seems like any other formal holiday, with a twist. They believe Father Christmas brings presents on Christmas Eve. A typical Christmas feast consists of codfish with vegetables and boiled potatoes, followed by shellfish and wild meats. What makes the feast a little strange are the extra plates and seats set at the table for the souls of the dead. By inviting them to the dinner table, they hope to feed these souls in exchange for good fortune in the year to come.

Czech Republic: To start the celebration of a Czech Christmas, a proper full cleaning of the house is mandatory. On December 6, St. Nicholas arrives with an angel and a devil. The angel has a book and pen to record who has been bad or good. If you've been bad, a bad child may be thrown into the devil's sack and taken to Hell. Luckily, this part is a myth and bad children are given coal, rocks or potatoes. Meanwhile, on Christmas Eve, you can find single women tossing shoes. A single woman stands with her back to the door and throws a shoe over her shoulder. If it lands with the heel facing the door, she will be single for the next year. If it lands with the toe facing the door, she should make wedding plans.

Venezuela: A traditional Venezuelan Christmas can be quite colorful. It was a tradition for people to paint their houses 2-4 weeks before Christmas so it would be nicely decorated for Christmas. Similar to other Latin countries, families go to Midnight Mass and return home to open presents right afterwards. Strangely, en route to Christmas Eve mass, it is typical for streets to be closed off for people to roller-skate on this particular day. It is common to hear people shout in the streets "Jesus is born!"

India: One would think not many people celebrate Christmas in India, and if they do, they are mostly tourists. Since India has such a huge population and only 2.3% are Christians, it actually equals to 25 million individuals who celebrate. Similar to Christian traditions, Midnight Mass is celebrated and presents are exchanged aftewards. But, there is a delicious twist on the traditional Christmas tree. Instead of a pine tree, a banana or mango tree is decorated. Sometimes, leaves of the tree are even used to decorate the house.

### Celebrating the holidays deployed

"I have missed holidays before. We have a mission to do. and you can't always be where you would like to be when you are a Soldier. I will be clebrating the holidays with my co-workers, and it will be just fine."

Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Wood



Army Spc. Jessica Jone

"It feels like any other day. The mission continues on, and we miss our familys. But the Soldiers and Airmen I've met here are like my new family. I have made so many friends on this deployment and I'm sure they will be friendships that will last a lifetime. I can't wait to share the memories with my family. Whether they be good or bad, this deployment is something I'll remember forever."

> Air Force Senior Airman Alan Larrimore



Courtesy Photo

I will be working and thinking of my family & friends. It is different because I am thousands of miles away, I want to wake up on Christmas with gifts to open and food to make for the annual dinner we have.

The S4 shop is having a little Christimas party though. and we will exchange gifts and have snacks.

**Army Sgt. Kimberly Howard** 



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Army Spc. Jessica Jones



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### A CHALLENGE TO BE A BETTER PERSON, NCO



Army Capt. Michelle Lunate

#### By Army Capt. Michelle Lunato

Getting promoted to sergeant is an important step for a Soldier. It means you are now a leader – a noncommissioned officer. This new position comes with added responsibility, higher standards, and more people watching your actions. The new environment can be a lot of pressure for some Soldiers. And when it occurs on a deployment, it can be even more of a struggle.

For Atlanta resident, Army Sgt. Kimberly L. Howard, noncommissioned officer in charge of resource management, 359th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, the new rank on her first deployment is more of a welcome challenge than a struggle.

"I realize that deployments test you mentally, physically, and emotionally," said Howard. "And only the strongest survive."

Howard says she surviving the tests so far and getting stronger each day, thanks to her history and training. "I have a military background in my family, and the Army has provided me with a lot of education."

Even with this preparation, Howard still didn't know what to expect completely from her first deployment and her new position as sergeant. "This deployment is different than I expected," said Howard. "I am kind of glad I am here though. It has made me appreciate things more." I dearly miss the small things we take for granted in the United States like, a bathroom under the same roof as your bed, and the privacy of your own space, explained the sergeant. But, with that said, she has found that these deficiencies are just part of deployment life. "You mind-set is totally different here," said Howard. "The military matures you. You can't just run home, and you can't quit."

As a new NCO, Howard says she has had to step up her performance even more, and carry herself differently than in the beginning of the deployment when she was just a specialist. "Now

See HOWARD, page 18

### **Brigade Commander:**

Celebrate the holidays, honor your sacrifice



Army Capt. Michelle Lunato

AS the New Year passed us quickly, so does the time for our redeployment. If you are like most people, you made resolutions for the New Year, a tradition that dates back many years.

As you work on those resolutions, I ask that you go through your list of goals you wanted to accomplish during this deployment. There are many things we need to get done. Not to mention there is probably another list of personal goals too, at least there is for me.

There is not much time to get them done – just over 90 days until our return, but who's counting.

As we count down

the final days of our deployment, it is important we make the days count – both in Afghanistan and on the home front.

Have no doubt your servicemember or contractor will be fully engaged over the next several months, taking care of day-to-day requirements, but more importantly, preparing things for our inbound replacements and our return home to loved ones.

I ask you to continue to take care of yourselves, your families, your friends and each other, allowing your servicemember to stay focused on the critical mission at hand. We need to leave here knowing we did the best we could to complete our foxhole and set our replacements up for complete success.

With each day that passes, we write another day in history. Let's make it a history worth remembering.

Proud to have the opportunity to serve each and every one of you,

Col. Chris Kemp 359th TTSB Commander Recommended Reading

#### Sponsored by Center for Army Leadership

- Building Character:
   Strengthening the Heart of Good Leadership ~
   Gene Klann
- First, Break all the Rules:
   What the World's Greatest
   Managers Do Differently
   ~ Marcus Buckingham
   & Curt Coffman
  - Judgement: How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls ~ Noel M. Tichy & Warren G. Bennis
  - Lead On A Practical Approach to Leadership ~
     Rear Admiral Dave Oliver, Jr.
    - Once an Eagle ~
       Anton Myrer
- The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You ~ John C. Maxwell
  - The Human Element: Productivity, Self-Esteem and the Bottom Line ~ Will Schultz
  - The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People ~ Stephen R. Covey
- Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment: How to Improve Productivity, Quality and Employee Satisfaction ~ William C. Byham

### PROMOTIONS



Army Spc. Jessica Jones Army Capt Cervis Carlisle, HHC commander, congratulates Spc. Jacob Riffe, intelligence analyst, after he is promoted to sergeant.



Ms. Danielle Milinski

Army Sgt Mellssa Gray, Enterprise technician, and Sgt. 1st Class Hembree, Future Operations project manager, promote Air Force Airman Alan Larrimore. outage manger, to Senior Airman the old fashion way <u>at the Joint NetOps Contr</u>ol Center in November.

#### HHC, continued from page 4

Army Spc. Thomas Robinson, human resources specialist ~ Robinson, an Augusta, Ga. resident, has kept busy on this deployment by volunteering as a disc jockey on various Morale, Welfare and Recreation events for a variety of units.

**Army Staff Sgt. Eric Pope**, supply noncommissioned officer in charge ~ The Aiken, South Carolina resident has been the supply sergeant for the brigade headquarters for a few years. He also previously deployed with the 324th Expeditionary Signal Battalion to Iraq.

**Army Sgt. Shauna Phillips**, human resources sergeant ~ Phillips is an Augusta, Ga. resident and has the difficult task of maintaining many of the records for Soldiers in HHC.

Army Spc. Jessica Jones, maintenance specialist ~ Jones grew up in Swainsboro, Ga. and has spent part of this deployment performing maintenance on tactical vehicles for combat teams. She has also been a valuable part of the supply team by helping them with huge shipments. She even acted as the brigade photographer for two weeks.

Army Spc. Courtesia Wilson, supply specialist ~ Wilson hails from Jessup, Ga., and was pulled out of the 324th Expeditionary Signal Battalion to deploy with the 359th. She has been in the Army for 18 months, and joined to further her education. Currently, she is studying to be a physician's asssistant, and upon redeployment will return attending courses at Paine College in Augusta, Ga.

Army 1st Sgt. Ricardo Pastrana, first sergeant ~ The Puerto Rico native was pulled out of the 415th Chemical Brigade in Greenville, S.C. to deploy with the 359th. He is married and has three children. Pastrana is the former maintenance sergeant for the brigade. Upon redeployment, he will be assigned to the 377th Chemical Company at Fort Lee, Va.





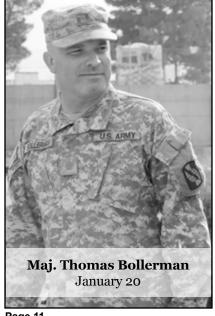
Photos by Army Capt. Michelle Lunato

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359th TTSB Soldiers with

January Birthdays

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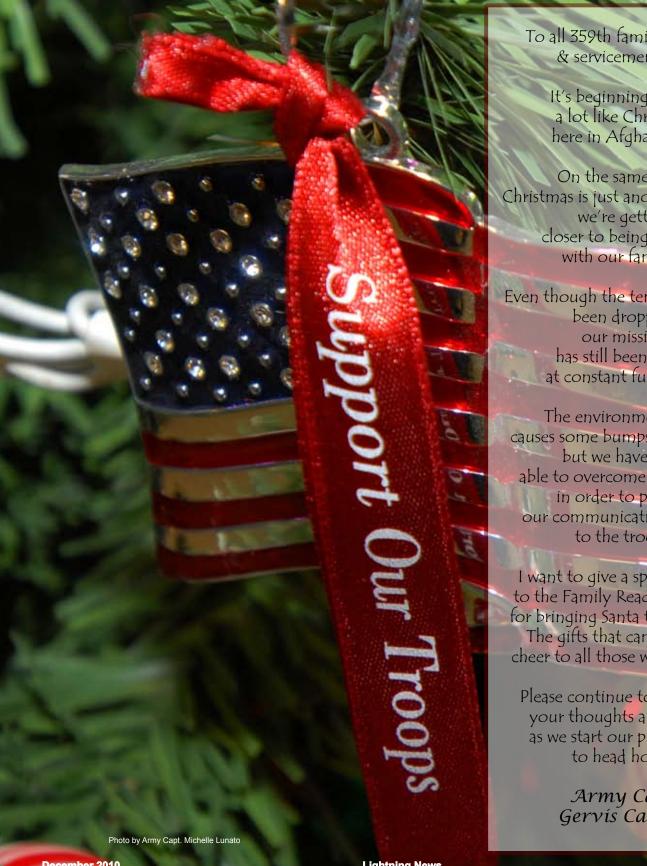




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### Holiday Messages from Afghanistan:

To the families and friends who support the troops



To all 359th familes, friends & servicemembers,

> It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas here in Afghanistan.

On the same note, Christmas is just another sign that we're getting closer to being a home with our families.

Even though the temperature has been dropping our mission has still been going at constant full speed.

The environment here causes some bumps in the road, but we have been able to overcome most them in order to provide our communications service to the troops.

I want to give a special thanks to the Family Readiness Group for bringing Santa to the desert. The gifts that came brought cheer to all those who received.

Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we start our preparation to head home.

> Army Capt. Gervis Carlisle

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I miss all my family and friends and wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

Army Chief Warrant Officer 4
William Wood

I love you all
and pray you all have a safe
and Merry Christmas.
I will be home soon.

Army Sgt. Kímberly Howard To all my family in the Carolina's,

I love you guys.

I can't wait to see you and get back down South to some warm weather and some fishin'.

And to my wife, Alison, and all the family back in Minnesota,

This year probably won't be a white Christmas like last year's for me, but we will have many more together.

Love you and see you soon,

Air Force Senior Airman Alan Larrimore

I would like to extend a Christmas wish to my wonderful wife Lisa and our family.

Enjoy your time together this Christmas and share in the joy of the season.

Be good to each other and support each other.

I love you and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Army 1st Lt. Vincent Cooper

#### Happy Holidays to all,

During this time of year, the deployed Soldiers try to make the best of it. It is not always easy though. We can put up decorations, the dining facility can set up lavish decor with more food than one could ever eat - but it doesn't replace being home.

From someone who has been deployed many times, missed many holidays with family - I can only say THANK YOU for the support. It may not always feel like what we are doing is beneficial, but I can tell you there are many Afghans and Iraqis who are sitting at their tables enjoying freedoms they have not had in many years, or ever before.

My family has supported us through my grandfather in WWII, my dad in Vietnam, and my trips to Iraq, Korean, Egypt & now, Afghanistan.

With support from our families and friends, we grow stonger and wiser with these separtions. However, we would alway prefer to be at home with those we love - whose freedoms we are protecting.

Retired Lt. Col. Scott Wisnieski

To Bambi, Sally, Christina & Buffy,

Thanks for being the best sisters and friends I could have ever asked for.
I love and adore you!

To my precious children, Pominique & Nicolas,

I don't think
I could love you more.
You are my reason
to be a better person.
Hang in there.
I will be home soon.

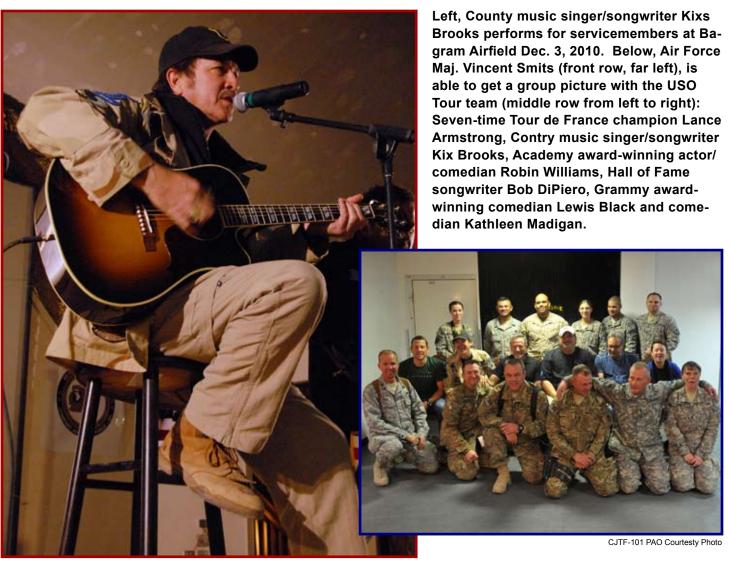
Army Capt.
Michelle Lunato

### **USO** Tour Stops in Bagram



Army Staff Sgt. Michael L. Sparks, 17th PAD Above, Seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstong greets the crowd of Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, contractors and Department of Defense Civlians during the USO Tour in December at Bagram Airfield. Left, Army Sgt. Jacob Riffe, intelligence analyst, (front row, far right), grabs a chance to be in a group picture with the USO Tour team (middle row from left to right): Seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, Contry music singer/songwriter Kix Brooks, Academy award-winning actor/comedian Robin Williams, Hall of Fame songwriter Bob DiPiero, Grammy award-winning comedian Lewis Black and comedian Kathleen Madigan.

CJTF-101 PAO Courtesty Photo
Lightning News



Army Staff Sgt. Michael L. Sparks, 17th PAD



CJTF-101 PAO Courtesty Photo

Army 1st Sgt. Carolyn Suazo (front, far left), Army Sgt. Natanisha Hershberger (front, second one in from left), and Army Sgt. 1st Class Doyle, (front, second one in from right), take a moment after the show to get a group picture with the USO Tour team who visited servicemembers stationed at Bagram Airfield Dec. 3, 2010.

## Holiday Party Brings Smiles, Relaxation





Photos by Army Capt. Michelle Lunato

Above Left, Air Force Staff Sgt. Farrell Dottin, outage manager, Joint NetOps Control Center - Afghanistan, shows off his double dessert. Above, Right, Army Sgt. Maj. Mary Howard-Edwards, sergeant major, and Army Maj. Robert Nesmith, future operations officer in charge, both of the Joint NetOps Control Center - Afghanistan, enjoy the Christmas party with presents and a hot meal.



Left, Air Force Capt. Stan Hashimoto, Information Assurance/Computer Network **Defense officer** in charge; Senior Airman Alan Larrimore, NetOps outage manager, and 1st Lt. Matthew Takanen, Enterprise deputy officer in charge, all of the Joint NetOps control Center-Afghanistan, dress in the Christmas spirit.

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Above, Army Sgt. 1st Class Warren Waugh, NetOps noncommissioned officer in charge, plays a competitive game of foosball.



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Above, task force staff officers serve servicemembers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 359th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, and Airmen and contractors assigned to the Joint NetOps Control Center-Afghanistan Christmas Eve dinner during the holiday party Dec. 24, 2010 at Bagram Airfield.



Above, Army Staff Sgt. Lyle Sloan, satellite network engineers, is disguised as one of Santa's reindeer at the party. Left, Army Capt. Anthony Hillmon, NetOps battle captain, fills the role of Santa's elf by helping deliver the presents from the 359th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade Family Readiness Group in Augusta, Ga.

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Above, Army 1st Lt. Thomas Grasso, change management officer in charge, eagerly opens up his gift from the Family Readiness Group during the Christmas party Dec. 24, 2010. Below, Army Spc. James Crooks, brigade maintenance sergeant, waits patiently for the Christmas meal to be served after helping set up the all party decorations at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation's 8-Ball Room.



### HOWARD, continued from page 8

that I'm an NCO, I have to maintain certain standards and more responsibility."

However, the Army standards and values are not a new thing to Howard. As a matter of fact, they should NOT be new to any Soldier, she said. "If I am not mistaken, the Army values and standards are things we should follow as people — not just because we are in the military."

This belief does not come as a surprise to Howard's leaders. "She already had them [values/standards] before she even entered the Army," said Army Sgt. Maj. Mary Howard-Edwards, supply and logistics sergeant major. "They are second nature for her."

Knowing and living the Army values does not mean I won't make mistakes though, said Howard. "You have to make mistakes to learn," continued the 25-year-old sergeant. "Mistakes are going to happen. That is how you learn." The key to this process is to not repeat the same errors over and over. "If you keep making the same mistakes, you are not learning," she said.

Lack of learning is not a trait of Sgt. Howard's said Howard-Edwards. "She grasps things so fast," she explained. "I give her something different and she takes charge of it."

Part of that may be her self-described sponge-like quest for knowledge. "I soak up whatever people have to give me," said Howard. "Whether it is knowledge or criticism, if it will



Army Capt. Michelle Lunato

make me a better person and NCO, I am all for it."

This quick-learning skill is a huge benefit in Howard's position in resource management. "She is dealing with multi-million dollar packets, so paying attention to detail is a must," said Howard-Edwards.

"One small mistake can really cost you," and make you start a tedious packet over again, Howard said. "We are dealing with so much money that you have to take it seriously. If something is wrong, it comes back on us." As someone who chastises herself for mistakes, she says she is always trying to improve and avoid errors.

With that attitude, the goal to constantly learn, and a natural moral compass, Sgt. Howard makes it happen, said Army Sgt. Kimberly L. Howard, noncommissioned officer in charge of resource management, is tired but happy after completing the Army 10-Miler held at **Bagram** Airfield.

Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Wood, supply and logistics maintenance officer. "Sgt. Howard is someone who is hard working, getting the mission done and doing the right thing in the process."

She has all the qualities of leadership, said Howard-Edwards. "She is amazing with her inner strength. You don't see too many E-5s [sergeants] like that now. Not even E-6s [staff sergeants] or E-7s [sergeants first class]," for that matter.

Howard seems to be adjusting well to the new world of the NCO, said Howard-Edwards. "She is on the other side of the fence now, and people are looking at her." If she keeps this path and pace, Howard-Edwards said, I have no doubt, she will be great leader in the future.

### Strong Bonds Training

Recognizing the importance of Army families and that Soldiers with strong relationships make better Soldiers, Army chaplains initiated relationship skills building training and support in 1997. Since then, Strong Bonds has grown and developed into a sharply focused, prevention-oriented program available to active duty, Guard, and Reserve Soldiers and their families. Currently, Strong Bonds has two readiness programs to meet the needs of Army Reserve Soldiers and their families.

www.arfp.org/strongbonds

Strong Bonds Couples-Strengthens the marital bond, giving couples the tools information they nged for better communication and relationship building. Originally referred to as Building Strong and Ready Families. There are great programs in place to assist married Soldiers with the reunion process with spouse and family. "Strong Bonds" (marriage retreats) offers Army Reserve Soldiers and their spouses a way to address the issues they face upon returning home. The curriculum: Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP).



The Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) is research based and teaches couples how to communicate effectively, solve problems and manage conflict without damaging closeness.

The training is led by chaplains in comfortable, re-

laxing settings and will blend straightforward instruction with enjoyable, non-threatening practical exercises.

Strong Bonds Single Soldiers- Focuses on the skills of finding the right partner and building a great relationship.

#### **Single Events:**

28-30 January ~ Tampa, Fla. 29 April-1 ~ May San Diego, Calif. 3-5 June ~ San Antonio, Texas 26-28 August ~ Orlando, Fla.

#### **Marriage Enrichment Events:**

11-13 Febuary ~ Tampa, Fla.
18-20 March ~ San Diego, Calif.
3-5 June ~ San Diego, Calif.
5-7 August ~ Orlando, Fla.



For additional information: beverly.renata.jones@usar.army.mil

"The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them.

That's the essence of inhumanity."

~G.B. Shaw~

