

E-Edition

WARRIOR MEDIC

MONTHLY

Happy New Year

Wishing you the best
in 2012!



An Army Reserve Medical Command Publication

Home for the Holidays

Last of U.S. Troops Leave Iraq

By The Associated Press

KHABARI CROSSING, Kuwait, Dec 18, 2011 --A gate sliding shut at the Kuwaiti border provided the backdrop for the final act of the Iraq war which cost nearly 4,500 American and more than 100,000 Iraqi lives.

The U.S. military says the last American troops are now out of Iraq as the nearly nine-year, \$800 billion war ends.

The final convoy rolled across the border into neighboring Kuwait as day broke on Sunday.

The last convoy of MRAPs, heavily armored personnel carriers, made a largely uneventful journey out except for a few equipment malfunctions along the way. It was dark and little was visible through the MRAP windows.

Along the road, a small group of Iraqi soldiers waved to the departing American troops.

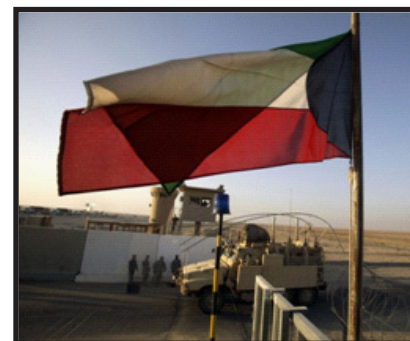


Kuwaiti border military police (right) and Soldiers from 265th Movement Control Team close the gate at the Khabari Crossing on the Iraq-Kuwait border December 18, 2011, after the final convoy crossed the border from Iraq. (Photo by Master Sgt. Montiqo White)

Soldiers wave to colleagues as a section of the last American military convoy to depart Iraq from the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division arrives after crossing over the border into Kuwait (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images)



Soldier (above) gives two thumbs up as the last MRAP (right) crossed over Iraq-Kuwait border. (AP photo: Maya Alleruzzo)



By Geoff Zieglewicz, Stars and Stripes



Troops home for the holidays, a Soldier reunites with a Family member after returning from Iraq. (Photo by John Moore)

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Operation Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn

They [Soldiers] will cross the border out of Iraq with their heads held high. One of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of the American military will come to an end. Iraq's future will be in the hands of its people. America's war in Iraq will be over.

President Obama, 14 December 2011

The magnitude of what this Nation and our Soldiers have accomplished in Iraq is unprecedented. We have never been more proud of our Army – our Soldiers, Civilians, and our Families. You freed over twenty-five million people from tyranny and given hope when hope was forsaken. Our Army provided new opportunity for the people of Iraq. No other Army in the world could have accomplished what you have done – Only American Soldiers.

Throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn, our Soldiers embodied physical and mental toughness and courage under fire. Over the past eight years, the quality of our Soldiers has stood in stark contrast to the desert sands. Just as the WWII generation defeated tyranny across the globe, a new generation – galvanized by the attacks of September 11th – bravely defeated tyranny once again. Even during the darkest days in Iraq, our Soldiers never wavered in the face of growing doubt. They continued to risk life and limb for a cause larger than themselves. For their heroic action, they received nearly 9,000 awards for valor including two Medals of Honor, 16 Distinguished Services Crosses, and 408 Silver Stars.

We remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, our Wounded Warriors, our Gold Star Families, and all of our loved ones who have been touched by the horror of war. Their sacrifices have given meaning to our values and ideals. For that, we thank them. A grateful Nation will always remember, respect, and appreciate these heroes as the Next Greatest Generation.

We are extremely proud of all of our Soldiers, Civilians, and Families. Our Army has once again proved that it is America's Force of Decisive Action. Thank you for a job well done. Army Strong!

Raymond F. Chandler III

Raymond F. Chandler III
Sergeant Major of the Army

Raymond T. Odierno

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

John M. McHugh

John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army

A message from the Chief, Army Reserve

As another holiday season approaches, we should make the most of the opportunity to gather with friends and Family — for it's during the holiday season that we are pointedly reminded of the values we treasure as Americans and why we continue to strive to safeguard our Nation.

Our grateful country salutes its Army Reserve Soldiers and their Families for their service and sacrifice in ensuring the freedoms we all enjoy.

Freedoms like spending the holiday season with loved ones and celebrating in special, individual ways. As you observe the holidays within your own Family traditions, I encourage you to do so responsibly.

This holiday season we have much to celebrate. Our military has successfully completed its mission in Iraq and has been a big part of bringing a new democracy and stability to that region. The Army Reserve continues its key role supporting the operational force in Afghanistan, while supporting humanitarian relief, disaster response, and theater security cooperation missions around the world.

While we have many Soldiers coming home, we must keep in mind those who are currently deployed or stationed overseas. Soldiers serving in harm's way in Afghanistan, Kuwait, the Horn of Africa and other locations will be away from Family and friends during the holidays. I ask that you keep them in mind and hold them close in your prayers.

We must also remember the Soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives in service to this great Nation, and our Wounded Warriors, who are fighting to recover from their injuries. Reach out to them and reach out to their Families during this holiday season — help bring good cheer and happy memories.

Take care of yourselves, your buddies and your Families throughout the holidays and into the New Year. Each and every one of you are invaluable to our Nation and to its future. Should you or a Soldier you know need help or need someone to talk to, have the courage to reach out to someone in your command, in your unit, in your Family, or in the numerous support programs the Army Reserve provides. No Soldier need ever be alone.

My wife, Laura, and I wish you a very safe and happy holiday season and we look forward to a healthy and prosperous New Year for the whole Army Reserve Family.

JACK C. STULTZ

Lieutenant General, US Army

Chief, Army Reserve/Commanding General, US Army Reserve Command

To view Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz and Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Schultz video message to the troops visit: <http://youtu.be/Z0nKwF6Dzrc>

A message from the Commanding General, Army Reserve Medical Command,

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

Cathy and I want to extend our warmest greetings to you as we celebrate the holiday season and look toward the New Year.

Many of you have recently returned home from deployments and others are preparing for one -- wherever they need us, the Warrior Medics will answer the call. I commend the continued service and commitment more than 1,700 Warrior Medic Soldiers who proudly defend our Nation at home and abroad.

For our deployed troops, the demands of being away from home and displaced from Family and friends are not taken for granted. Your personal sacrifice that you and your families make, this great Nation expresses its sincere gratitude for your selfless service to the country.

We want to thank each of you for your dedication, commitment and support throughout the year. Especially, this time of year, we remember our fallen comrades and their Families and our Soldiers recovering from injuries.

May God forever protect those who serve our great Nation, and he continues to bless your Families and loved ones during this holiday season.

Have a healthy and safe holiday, and prosperous New Year.

Army Strong!

RJK

ROBERT J. KASULKE

Major General, MC, USAR

Commanding

Medics First - Warriors Always

Army's First Female Surgeon General sworn in

By Joe Gould and Michelle Tan - Staff writers



WASHINGTON, Dec 17, 2011 --The Army medical community is taking the many lessons learned from 10 years of war to sharpen its focus on prevention, wellness and healing troops' physical and psychological scars, the service's new surgeon general said.

Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho, first woman and first nonphysician to become the Army's surgeon general, was promoted and assumed her new duties at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va., on Dec. 7.

She took command of Medical Command at a ceremony on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, two days earlier.

Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho

New role: 43rd surgeon general and commanding general of Army Medical Command

Previous assignments include:

- Deputy surgeon general, Office of the Surgeon General, Falls Church, Va., 2010-2011
- 23rd chief of Army Nurse Corps, 2008-2011
- Commander, Western Regional Medical Command, Fort Lewis, Wash., 2008-2010

• Commander, Madigan Army Medical Center, Tacoma, Wash., 2008-2009

• Commander, Walter Reed Health Care System, Washington, D.C., 2007-2008

• Commander, DeWitt Health Care Network, Fort Belvoir, Va., 2004-2006

Other military assignments include:

- Staff nurse on a multiservice specialty ward, staff and head nurse of a Level III emergency department, Evans Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson, Colo.

• Nurse counselor, 1st Recruiting Brigade (Northeast)

• Head nurse of a 22-bed emergency department, Womack Army Medical Center, Fort Bragg, N.C.

• Chief nurse and hospital commander of a 500-bed field hospital, 249th General Hospital, Fort Gordon, Ga.

• Assistant branch chief, Army Nurse Corps Branch, Total Army Personnel Command, Alexandria, Va.

• Assistant deputy for Healthcare Management Policy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

• Deputy commander for nursing and commander of the DeWitt Health Care Network, Fort Belvoir

• Deputy commander for nursing, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and North Atlantic Regional Medical Command, Washington, D.C.

• In 2011, deployed with I Corps as special assistant to the commander, International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, Kabul, Afghanistan Education:

• Bachelor of Science, University of North Carolina

• Master of Science as a clinical trauma nurse specialist, University of Pittsburgh

• Master of Science in National Resource Strategy, Industrial College of the Armed Forces

• Command and General Staff College graduate

Missions and achievements:

• Deployed to Haiti with the Army's first health facility assessment team

• Honored in December 2001 by Time Life Publications for her actions at the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001

• Among 15 nurses selected by the American Red Cross and Nursing Spectrum to receive recognition as a "Nurse Hero" in 2002

• Selected as the USO's Woman of the Year in April 2009

• Affiliate faculty with Pacific Lutheran University School of Nursing, Tacoma, Wash., starting in May 2009

• Appointed distinguished professor in the Graduate School of Nursing at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in May 2010

Awards and decorations include:

- Distinguished Service Medal
- Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters
- Bronze Star Medal

• Meritorious Service Medal with six oak leaf clusters

• Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

• Afghanistan Campaign Medal

She succeeds Lt. Gen. Eric Schoonmaker, who is retiring after more than three decades of service.

"We are dedicated to identifying and caring for soldiers who have sustained physical and psychological trauma associated with a protracted war," Horoho said at the Dec. 7 ceremony. "A focus on wellness and prevention will ensure that our soldiers are ready to heed the nation's call."

Horoho said among other priorities, she is focused on optimizing resources to deliver "efficient and effective" care to soldiers.

"One of Army medicine's greatest challenges over the next three to five years is managing the escalating cost of providing world-class health care in a fiscally constrained environment," she said. "I am confident that we will



Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, Army chief of staff, and retired Col. Ray Horoho, her husband, pin the three-star epaulets on the shoulders of Lt. Gen. Patricia D. Horoho, the 43rd surgeon general and commanding general of the U.S. Army Medical Command, in Dec. 7, 2011, ceremony at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Arlington, Va. Photo by Rob McIlvaineGen.

meet all challenges in true Army medicine fashion."

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno, who swore in Horoho, acknowledged her achievement as the first woman to assume the Army's top medical post. The former deputy surgeon general and chief of the Army Nurse Corps, Odierno said, has "outstanding potential," and is "exactly the kind of leader we want."

Army medical professionals also are looking for ways to give resiliency skills to soldiers and their families; improve access to behavioral health care; develop its care for soldiers with concussive and blast injuries; and expand its pain management procedures to include nontraditional treatments. They are looking for ways to give resiliency skills to soldiers and their families; improve access to behavioral health care; develop its care for soldiers with concussive and blast injuries; and expand its pain management procedures to include nontraditional treatments instead of solely relying on prescription drugs.

"This is our opportunity to re-avow to our soldiers and their families that wherever they are, they'll always have world-class health care," Horoho said. "We are united in resolve to care for those who defend our nation."

Army medicine — and the Army as a whole — will face challenges in the future, she said.

"I understand there'll be significant challenges ahead and operational requirements," she said. "I see those challenges as windows of opportunity to shape the future."

In Texas, Odierno applauded Schoomaker, who, he said, "dramatically changed the face of Army medicine." He cited Schoomaker's leadership in the treatment of traumatic brain injury, blast injuries and pain management, among other areas.

"Every soldier today knows they are supported by the best medical care the world has to offer," Odierno said.

In his remarks, Schoomaker said the Army is "a people business ... with the soldier as the nucleus," and Army medics have fought alongside and cared for the nation's war fighters throughout history.

"We are part of a long and storied legacy," he said. "Army medicine has constantly innovated, and it can afford to follow no other path. I'm grateful our nation gave me the opportunity to serve

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U.S. Army Medical Leaders presented with Polish Medal

By Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Fincham



HEIDELBERG, Germany, Dec. 15, 2011- Two leaders from the Europe Regional Medical Command were awarded the Polish Armed Forces Medal at a ceremony here, Dec. 15.

On behalf of the Polish Minister of Defense, Col. Stefan Walowski, the Polish senior national representative for Ramstien, presented Polish Armed Forces Medals (Silver) to Col. John M. Cho, the 30th Medical Command commander, and Lt. Col. Rachele Smith, the Mannheim Army Health Center and Coleman Troop Medical Clinic commander, for their work while serving at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, or LRMC, and their support to the wounded Polish service members receiving treatment there.

"On behalf of the minister of defense I would like to express our appreciation for the service that was provided to the hundreds of Polish Soldiers," Walowski said. "Hundreds of them were able to return back to Poland, back to their country, back to their families and back to the service. From the bottom of our hearts we would like to thank you for this medical support."

The award, which was established in 1999, is intended to recognize service to the Polish Army by foreign civilian and military personnel.

Cho, who served as the LRMC commander before taking command of the 30th MEDCOM, said that he will treasure this award and accepted it on behalf of the LRMC workforce.

"On behalf of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, civilian personnel at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center who are also our doctors, nurses, technicians, and administrators, I accept this award," Cho said. "In many ways they are the heroes I just feel blessed to have and the opportunity to have served at Landstuhl during that time."

Thousands of service members from both U.S. and Allied forces have received care at LRMC during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Polish troops exemplified the warrior

ethos during their time at the hospital, according to Cho.

"The wounded warriors at Landstuhl are very special in many ways, and our Polish wounded warriors provided inspiration to everyone for their tenacity and their humility. We know that we have a tremendous partnership with our Polish partners and we look forward to our continued relationship in the years to come," Cho said.

Smith served as the chief of the patient administration section at LRMC and worked closely with the liaison teams from the various countries that make up the coalition forces.

"It's a patient-centric service organization that is resonated throughout the hospital and that is also resonated within the liaison teams. This truly is an honor and it was an honor to serve at Landstuhl alongside the Polish liaison team," she said.

Riverdale thanks local soldier

BY Lslie Scott, Staff Writer, Suburban Trends



December 28, 2011, The governing body honored a local resident for his quick thinking and compassionate care out on the battlefield.

At the Dec. 16 meeting of the Borough Council, the Maj. Kamal S. Kalsi, of the U.S. Army was presented with a proclamation thanking him for all that he did to help both soldiers and civilians while serving in Afghanistan. Kalsi is a doctor credited for bringing two soldiers who were clinically dead back to life and caring for over 750 other soldiers and civilians. He was also awarded a Bronzed Star for his meritorious service.

While there he said he treated, "pretty much everything from IED bombs (improvised explosive devices), to gunshot wounds, burns and everything in between, to heart attacks and a lot of the regular stuff as well."

Kalsi is from India. He grew up in nearby Lincoln Park and has lived in Riverdale for the past five years. He graduated from Boonton High School and got his undergraduate education at Stevens Institute in Hoboken. It was during his medical school career at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine when he was approached

by Army recruiters. Although he said serving was a good way to help pay for medical school, Kalsi is no stranger to the military. His great-grandfather served in the British-Indian Army and his father and grandfather were part of India's Air Force.

He served in the U.S. Army Reserves part time as he completed medical school, his residency, and fellowship before going overseas to Afghanistan. He was in Afghanistan for seven months and came home to his family and wife and two young children this past August. He has to serve three years full time before he has completed his responsibility and there's about a year and a half remaining, he said. Right now he will remain in the states and has no idea, at this time, when he will have to go back. Growing up he said he had always known he wanted to go into medicine but joining the Army to him was actually a bonus.

The Army has been supportive of Kalsi. He practices Sikhism and in 2009 the Army gave him the first accommodation in over 30 years to wear a turban and beard while serving full time.

He said there was a lot of paperwork involved but the Army was willing to work with him.

While on the battlefield, the Army also made sure they had all of the lifesaving equipment necessary to help others.

"We are actually able to function like a regular trauma center would in the United States. And soldiers that needed extra emergency care and help were sent out by air to a fixed facility.

Even his fellow soldiers offered him support. "We have a lot of great support from my family to all the other soldiers that I serve with and we sort of lean on each other and we get through it. We think about all the good things we did." Although Kalsi is part of the medical team, he still got training like the other officers.

"We got to carry around a gun and be ready and know how to use it. We feel like we are part of the team and the medical team is a very important part of the mission and we feel very happy to be apart of the mission and we know that we provide a very important service."

Kalsi's specialty is emergency medicine with a subspecialty in emergency medical service and disaster

medicine.

As for the future, when his duty for the Army is completed, Kalsi is not sure what he will do. Right now he is working at the Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, N.C., in the emergency room.

Reflecting on Iraq

By Bryan Schwartzman, Jewish Exponent Staff



Philadelphia, Pa, December 28, 2011, Col. Mitchell Paulin has never doubted that the Iraq war, with its enormous cost in lives and dollars, has been worth it.

But ask Paulin -- who in 2003 was a surgeon attached to the 800th Military Police Brigade in Baghdad -- about what he thinks the longstanding



Col. Mitchell Paulin attending to a patient

results of the war effort will be, and his answer becomes more complicated.

"Do I think that the job is really finished? No," said the member of Keshet Israel Congregation in West Chester. "I'm sure if they were able to negotiate a better agreement of forces, we would still be there."

The news wasn't good in the first few days

after the U.S. pullout: A wave of bombings killed at least 70 people throughout the country, stoking fears of a breakdown of the

fragile political order and resumption of an

all-out sectarian conflict.

"You always hope that the rule of law will take precedence, but there is deep animosity in

that country amongst the individual sects," said the 55-year-old reservist

who has a private practice in Chester County. "How do you change generations of mistrust with a simple pullout of troops?"

With the formal conclusion of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States closed a chapter on one of the longest wars in its history. For the better part of four years, the war in Iraq was the nation's dominant -- and most divisive -- political issue, especially in 2005 and 2006 as the situation seemed to spiral out of control.

More recently, the U.S. presence in Iraq has largely moved off the front pages as the conflict in Afghanistan became more intense and the state of the economy became the center of national concern. But the pullout has refocused attention on the war that took the lives of nearly 4,500 Americans. Of those, 25 were Jewish,

according to a report compiled by the Forward. Among the soldiers who lost their lives was 1st Lt. David Bernstein, a Phoenixville native who was posthumously awarded the Silver Star. He died at age 24 on Oct. 18, 2003, in Taza, Iraq.

Over the span of the war, the Jewish Exponent has periodically profiled some of the Jewish men and women from the area who served in Iraq. A handful of veterans were interviewed by the Exponent in the days after the pullout. Each said that, once in uniform, the question of whether or not one supported or opposed U.S. policy became irrelevant: It was all about helping the person next to you.

"Political ramifications don't enter into it when you are given a job to do," said Paulin.

Like Paulin, each veteran interviewed said he would do it again.

Joshua Lipschutz applied to the Pennsylvania National Guard on Sept. 13, 2001, motivated by a desire to serve his country and help strike back at the terrorists who attacked it. In 2005, the medical doctor, Bala Cynwyd resident and member of Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El spent four months treating injured soldiers and Iraqi citizens at Camp Liberty, near the Baghdad airport.

Lipschutz, now 49, said that if you were going to be in Iraq, the base wasn't a bad place to be stationed. Sure, he had to treat patients who'd been terribly injured by bomb blasts, but he'd worked in an emergency room and wasn't particularly fazed by gore.

He had air-conditioned quarters and access to a gym and a cafeteria with plenty of dining options. The problem: The base took mortar fire on a daily basis. One came within 100 yards of Lipschutz and he felt the shock waves hit his body. (By contrast, when he was deployed in Afghanistan in the

winter of 2008 he slept on the ground in a tent, but the base took no fire.)

The father of two children at the time -- he's now got three, with two attending the Perelman Jewish Day School -- said he promised God that if he made it home from Iraq he'd wrap tefillin every day. Lipschutz has kept up his end of the deal. The doctor, who has earned the rank of lieutenant colonel and teaches at the University of Pennsylvania's medical school, said he felt he was serving the greater good all throughout his service.

"I felt that I was doing a good thing for America and also in Israel," said Lipschutz, referring to the threat that Saddam Hussein posed to the Jewish state.

The question of whether the United States should have gone to Iraq in the first place, or how historians will one day view the endeavor, are above his "pay-grade," said Lipschutz. "Everybody just goes to help their comrades. You had a job to do and you go do it and you hope for the best," he said, adding that he thinks all Americans should perform some kind of national service, even if it is not in the military. "I hope it works out. It will be a real shame if it was all in vain."

Rabbi Jon Cutler, a chaplain and naval captain, spent the winter of 1991 with U.S. troops in the Saudi Arabian desert; Scud missiles were an ever-present threat. The Flourtown resident said he never thought he'd be involved in another conflict with Iraq, but four years ago, he spent 13 months as a senior chaplain overseeing

about 20 other chaplains on Al Asad Air Base in western Iraq. Like Lipschutz, Cutler was primarily focused on serving the needs of American military personnel. Long deployments were tough on families and the chaplains working under Cutler often consoled soldiers who were going through all kinds of personal difficulties.

He also led Shabbat services each week for about two dozen Jews on a base of about 18,000 soldiers. Cutler erected a giant menorah on the base

and even helped build a semi-permanent synagogue there.

Having been in Iraq twice, how did he feel about the conclusion of Operation Iraqi Freedom?

"I was really happy. It is a relief. Finally, we are putting closure to this. Americans can actually come home," said Cutler in a phone interview from the U.S. base at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, East Africa. He has about a month left in his latest deployment.

Cutler said it is too soon to judge whether America succeeded in building a stable Iraq.

"It really is going to be up to the Iraqi people. How does one judge success? To me, one of the standards is meeting the needs of the people and having a multi-party system," he said. "Is it better now than under Saddam Hussein? Yes -- but then again, it is so fragile."

Mark Hess, a civilian advisor and mentor to U.S. Army commanders, returned last week from 13 months in Afghanistan. Back in 2007 and 2008, he was deployed in Iraq. Reluctant to divulge too much personal information, Hess would only say he lives in the Philadelphia area but would not be more specific.

Hess said that the United States succeeded in removing Hussein and beating back a resurgent Al Qaeda in Iraq.

"Sadly, our failure to act against a radical terrorist government next door in Iran left our soldiers in Iraq and the people of Iraq exposed to terrorist violence and intimidation from Iran," he wrote in an email. "The result is that Iraq now appears to be run by a pro-Iranian establishment of radical Shia. The moderate Shia have been intimidated and will probably not oppose them in the near term."

Paulin, the Chester County doctor -- and father of a 23-year-old daughter and 21-year-old son -- said that the American military performed admirably. He reiterated that in Iraq, the United States faced an extremely difficult task.

Paulin's homecoming in 2003 was doubly sweet: He celebrated his son's Bar Mitzvah just two weeks later.

The experience "reinforced to me that the United States was, without a doubt, the best place in the world to live. If you didn't think so before, you knew it when you came home. The U.S. military professionalism in all was unbelievable."

End of war: Military families talk about life after Iraq

Loved ones of local servicemen talk about life after the Iraq War.

By Julie Sherwood, staff writer, Messenger Post



On Dec. 15, when the Iraq war officially ended for American troops with an unceremonious, business-like observance behind concrete blast walls in a fortified compound at Baghdad International Airport, Staff Sgt. Marvin Singer III had been back just a few weeks from Iraq, having completed his 11th overseas tour -- six in Iraq and five in Afghanistan.

From the Army soldier's home base in Fort Campbell, Ky., the former Canadice resident and his fiancée looked forward to spending Christmas and New Year's together, along with other family, before Marvin's expected next deployment in Afghanistan.

Thinking of her son in a war zone -- is unnerving, said Marvin's mom, Kris Singer. -- As a mom, you don't get used to it, you just tolerate it.

In Bloomfield, another military family silently marked the end of American troops in Iraq with thoughts of future deployments to Afghanistan.

Last Christmas, Maj. Michael Spillane, a physicians' assistant who serves in the Army Reserve, wasn't home for the holiday. This year, he and his family will celebrate Christmas a few days after Dec. 25, when he returns from his latest tour in his work that has involved providing medical care and training in both Iraq and Afghanistan since he joined the reserves in 2000.



The Spillane family, (from left) Alex, Kristine, Karin and Michael. Canandaigua, NY

A physicians' assistant with Thompson Health, Spillane expects to be deployed again to Afghanistan in

March. He has mixed feelings about the end of American troops in Iraq and American efforts in Afghanistan, he said.

—We do what we can, said Spillane. He takes solace in the fact that the medical training and care he and others provide in the countries is needed during war as well as peace.

Spillane's wife, Karin, said after he was in Iraq for 13 months in 2008-09, it was tough learning he would be deployed for a subsequent tour in Afghanistan. —I just broke down and cried, she said. —I prayed a great deal. I was scared he'd get killed over there. Support from friends, family and their church made all the difference, she said. Michael and Karin have two children, Alex, 20, and Kristine, 16.

—I am proud of my dad, said Alex Spillane, a junior at SUNY Geneseo studying math/education. —I am glad he is willing to go over. In the best possible world, there wouldn't be a war, added Alex. —I hope there is a point in the future when there can be world peace.

New System Delivers Water, Fuel to Soldiers

By Bob Reinert/USAG-Natick Public Affairs



WASHINGTON, December 15, 2011—Everyone knows that without water and fuel, the modern Army would grind to a halt in the field.

Throughout military history, the challenge has been to deliver enough of those two precious commodities to the front lines to keep Soldiers moving. That continues to be an issue today in Afghanistan, where unforgiving terrain, weather, political conditions and the enemy can disrupt the flow of supplies.

Most often, fuel and water are delivered in 55-gallon drums or 500-gallon empty containers.

Resupply of fuel and water is always a concern," said Dave Roy, a current operations analyst with the Quick Reaction Cell at Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center. "Having to rely on a ... combat logistics patrol can be nerve-wracking at times, not just because those convoys are targets of insurgent activity.

"The environment and the terrain

... those convoys have to go over is like 'Ice Road Truckers' on steroids. These are the world's most deadly roads."

Roy added that, once the water and fuel arrive, the next problem is return. "Some of the challenges include having enough containers at the logistical supply points to refill with fuel, primarily, and water; the ability to transport product economically to its final destination; and being able to retrograde all of the empty containers back to the rear for reuse," Roy said. "We can't prioritize combat logistic patrols to take back empty 55-gallon drums. They take up too much room, and it's just not priority cargo."

A new system promises a more reliable, cost-effective way to transport the vital liquids in sufficient quantities without worrying about retrieving expensive equipment used in the delivery process. The Container Unitized Bulk Equipment system, or CUBE, allows for delivery by helicopter sling load, airdrop or ground.

The CUBE system contains a low-cost helicopter sling-load net, two crate-like, plastic containers, and two fuel blivets or water bladders. The CUBE is expected to cut costs by 50 percent, and the stackable, collapsible system would take up less space on

FOBs and be easier to transport back to logistics bases. Once the liquid products are dispensed, the crates can be re-purposed to provide the forward location with additional storage and transport containers.

As Roy pointed out, the CUBE system is a combination of items already in the government procurement system and off-the-shelf commercial items.

"There is a lot of low-hanging fruit that can be harvested simply by taking those components that would not normally have been thought could go together ... and nesting them together," Roy said. "Crazy ideas that work are not crazy for the entire force."

"Really, it's just being able to leverage strength through technology. There's a big payoff at the end

The need was identified in 2010 as the 101st Sustainment Brigade prepared for its deployment to Afghanistan. The Warfighter Protection & Aerial Delivery Directorate at NSRDEC, with John Mahon as the project lead, responded with a prototype of the CUBE.

The 101st SB took a number of the

systems with them. Since deploying, the 101st SB has funded and received, through NSRDEC, more than 100 systems with the primary bladder used to support fuel transportation. This system allowed the pre-positioning of fuel in anticipation of adverse weather at the most remote FOBs.

"The unit deploys to Afghanistan in September of 2010," Roy recalled. "While they're there, they're constantly calling back (and saying), 'Hey, we want some more of that stuff.'"

Roy and the QRC got involved. Now, seven CUBE units -- four for fuel, three for water -- are scheduled for delivery to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan by the end of 2011.

"We're very close to delivery," Roy said. "Developmental Test Command has provided a System Safety Confirmation, and we are on schedule to have the seven CUBE kits delivered from Peckham, an AbilityOne source, to the RDECOM Forward Assistance Science & Technology -- Center in Bagram, Afghanistan, in December.

"We're positioned now for a forward operational assessment of this capability by Army Test and Evaluation Command in Afghanistan in second quarter of this year. It's of interest across the force."

The NSRDEC QRC has collaborated with Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) Integrated Logistics Support Center (ILSC) Soldier-Product Support Integration

Directorate (S-PSID) to develop a locally produced Interim Technical Document that provides the basic functions of a technical manual. National Stock Numbers have been secured for each CUBE kit, as well (NSN: 1670-01-598-5071 -- Fuel, Container Unitized Bulk Equipment/NSN: 1670-01-598-5067 -- Water, Container Unitized Bulk Equipment).

Roy believes the system will prove useful for government agencies beyond the Department of Defense. "This has application for humanitarian missions executed by DoD, Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security, as well as the potential to support

U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management," said Roy, adding that it's a matter of transferring "this technology to make the maximum effective use of taxpayer dollars -- not just for Army or DoD use -- but across the full spectrum of the government so that the taxpayers get the biggest

benefit for our investment.”

Marion Native Earns Army's 'Top Doc' Award

By: Mike Conle| McDowell News



WASHINGTON, December 17, 2011--A Marion native was honored recently by the surgeon general of the U.S. Army for his work in creating a better system of treating soldiers who are serving our nation.

Capt. C.J. Atkinson received the Surgeon General's Physician Recognition Award for the U.S. Army at a Nov. 29 ceremony in Washington, D.C. It is commonly referred to as the "Top Doc" award. The award is given to one captain, one major, one lieutenant colonel and one colonel each year. The award was presented by Lt. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker, who was the 42nd surgeon general of the U.S. Army. And as it turns out, the ceremony was one of Schoomaker's last duties in the position because he retired the following week.

The award is given to recognize Army physicians who stand out among their peers. Once you win this award, you are not eligible for it again.

During the ceremony, Atkinson was also presented with the Meritorious Service Medal, which is a decoration presented to members of the U.S. Army who distinguish themselves by outstanding meritorious achievement or service to the United States.

Schoomaker cited Atkinson's achievement in re-organizing sick call at Fort Benning, Ga., which resulted in "increased efficiencies with measurable results in giving timely care to soldiers."

"It was a great honor," said Atkinson, adding he gives the credit to the soldiers at Fort Benning.

"These young men are every day American heroes," he said. "All of them are volunteers and some of them will be in harm's way."

A 1998 graduate of McDowell High, Atkinson is the son of Dr. Thomas Atkinson and Kathy Atkinson. He followed his father's medical footsteps and graduated from Wake Forest School of Medicine. But the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 would change his life. After that day, he decided to

make a military commitment for his country.

Atkinson spent a one-year deployment in Iraq, where he earned the Bronze Star. When he came home, he was assigned to a new clinic opening at Fort Benning for treatment of soldiers. Both he and Lt. Col. Mario Caycedo, also a family physician, had served their country in Iraq. They noticed that the old system for treatment was more convenient for the medical staff than it was for the patients.

"We decided it was pretty much unacceptable," said Atkinson.

So they came up with a new system of staffing and procedural changes that would better serve the patients in their care.

"We are now able to get 85 percent of our soldiers, who are medically cleared, back to training," he said.

At the Nov. 29 ceremony, Atkinson was joined by his wife Jesse Rae, their daughter Gracie and his parents as he received the honors from Schoomaker

Crisis Hot line Saves Suicidal War Veterans

By Christina Ginn, CNN



Canandaigua, New York, December 18, 2011--Suicide continues to plague the American military, with an estimated 18 war veterans in the United States ending their lives each day. One of the last resorts for veterans struggling with the return to civilian life is a suicide-prevention hot line based in upstate New York.

The humble offices of the Veterans Crisis Line in Canandaigua, New York, are like any other office space: desks, computers, telephones. But as you walk past each cubicle, you begin to hear extraordinarily disturbing conversations.

"I have a .45 pointed at my head," one caller says.

"Can you put that knife away for a bit while we talk? Can you do that for me? Can you hold off just for a little bit?" a hot line worker asks.

"What sort of weapons do you have?" another calmly responds.

The men and women who answer the Veterans Crisis Line phones are

on the front lines of an all-out war on suicide. Each speaks to the caller with a very clear purpose: keep the person on the phone long enough to get help.

"The first thing I say to a caller when they do have the object that they plan on killing themselves with them on their person, whether it's a loaded gun on their lap or the rope already strung, I always say to them, 'Can you agree to not shoot yourself, take your pills, get up on the ladder while we're on the phone?'" explained Maureen McHenry, a crisis line responder.

The responders are part investigator, part therapist and part best friend.

"We never ever give up on a rescue. Whenever a vet needs help, we will do whatever it takes to find him if he can't tell us where he is. Whatever it takes to get them help," said Rob Griffo, a health tech at the Veterans Crisis Line.

In 2011, the U.S. Army recorded 246 cases of confirmed or potential suicides among active-duty and reserve soldiers, according to statistics released in November. That number appears to be below the 2010 level of 305 for the full 12 months but above the second-highest year: 2009, which had 242 suicides.

The U.S. Marines have recorded 28 confirmed suicides and 163 attempted suicides this year through October. Current numbers were not available for the U.S. Navy, Air Force and National Guard. Those three branches reported suicides among service members in 2010 to be 39, 100 and 112, respectively.

The numbers illustrate a small segment of the continuing emotional and physical toll of 10 years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq and how it defies a host of efforts by the government to detect and solve the problem of suicide.

The Veterans Administration launched the Veterans Crisis Line in 2007, and close to 20,000 veterans have been rescued, officials say.

"We've taken over half a million calls, and 30,000 chats have come into the system," said Janet Kemp, the national director of the Veterans Crisis Line.

In addition to calling the hot line at 1-800-273-8255, veterans who are thinking about taking their own lives can chat with a responder at www.veteranscrisisline.net. Veterans can also reach out for help by sending a text to

838255.

And it's not just about the veterans. Active-duty soldiers also call in.

"We have had several thousand active-duty people who have called, but we suspect many more, because it's anonymous. We think that there are many more active-duty people who call and use our services," Kemp said.

Some Iraq vets say 'the war is not over'

Soldier dad surprises three children
Technology keeps military family's bond

Families and friends can call in to the hot line as well. Kemp says she encourages those who know a veteran who may be struggling with depression to reach out to the crisis line.

She says some of the warning signs that someone is contemplating suicide include "talking about death more often, starting to give away their possessions, saying things (like 'I probably won't be around by Christmas. I won't need to know that next year.'"

"If you hear those and know that they're depressed or trouble with work or families, certainly give us a call," Kemp said. While the responders handle the incoming calls to the hot line, health techs alert police departments and ambulances across the country to get help to veterans trying to take their own lives.

During a recent visit to the Veterans Crisis Line office, one veteran told responder Valerie Beaman that he planned to kill himself with a large knife to end what he called pain issues.

"When she talked to him further, he said that had taken all of his medication," said Melissa Morellaro, a crisis line health tech.

Beaman spent 45 minutes on the phone with the caller, trying to figure out exactly where the man was and then getting help to his front door. At one point, the veteran was so confused that he didn't know his address, presumably because of all the pills he had taken.

"Where's your wife now? She's at work? Can I send somebody to help you? OK, I think that's what I'm going to do. I think you want help. You called the hot line. And that's the best thing—Beaman told the veteran. When police arrived, there was problem.

"I could hear the struggle, but I don't think they knew I was there. Beaman told the veteran. When police arrived, there was problem.

"I could hear the struggle, but I don't think they knew I was there. They did say he's safe, and the officers were safe," Beaman said.

The responders are flying blind most of the time. They ultimately have no idea what is happening on the other end of the phone. The anxiety is excruciating.

A short time later, a Korean War veteran called the hot line, saying he was ready to end his life.

"So you said as soon as we get off the phone, you're going to take some pills? Is that all you plan on doing?" McHenry asked.

The veteran told McHenry his wife died this year.

"He had been married for 20 years. He called simply to give me a message to give to his family about funeral arrangements and that he wanted to be buried with a photograph of her," McHenry said.

She began to ask simple questions to deduce a location. In just a few minutes, she knew his race, his age, what he was wearing and that he was at a pay phone on the Staten Island Ferry dock.

In less than 15 minutes, police arrived to help. At least one life was saved that night.

Kim Jong Il, North Korean leader, is dead at age 69

By Chico Harlan, Published



TOKYO, December 18, 2011—Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader who threatened the world with his nuclear weapons ambitions and suppressed his own people with imprisonment and isolation, left in the wake of his death Saturday an antiquated country with a power vacuum.

Kim's death raises immediate questions about the future — and the stability — of perhaps the world's most isolated state, which for six decades has been held together by the Kim family personality cult. Kim was deified by state media, described as the "Dear Leader." A weeping television anchor Monday told North Korea of Kim's death.

Kim Jong Il, North Korea's leader whose nuclear ambitions for his iso-

lated communist nation dominated world security fears for years, has died from an apparent heart attack. (Dec. 18) Security analysts and officials from Seoul to Washington have long believed that Kim's death would double as a pivot point on the Korean Peninsula. But that poses a threat of its own, as North Korea tries to pass power to Kim's youngest son, Kim Jong Eun, who is in his 20s.

In an announcement Monday, North Korea called Kim Jong Eun a "great successor" and urged its people to follow his leadership. The state also conducted at least one short-range missile test, the Associated Press reported, citing South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

Yonhap quoted two South Korean military officials saying that such a test most likely was part of a routine drill and was not related to Kim Jong Il's death.

Until late last year, the younger Kim had lived his life almost entirely behind a wall of privacy. But as his father struggled with his health, he accelerated a controversial power transfer and, in late September 2010, named Kim Jong Eun to several top military and political posts. This year, when the elder Kim made his customary visits to military camps and factories across the country, his son often accompanied him — not as an equal, but as a trainee.

One concern, described by numerous Korean security experts, is that the younger Kim could face opposition from more senior North Korean officials, including Jang Song Thaek, who had been acting as a caretaker for the transition. In recent years, Kim Jong Il tried to minimize the power of other older party members, often demoting them — sometimes even banishing them to the countryside — so they wouldn't form allies of their own.

Since taking over from his father, Kim Il Sung, in 1994, Kim kept a tight hold on North Korean society, using the "juche" ideology — emphasizing national self-reliance to rationalize strict crackdowns on political opposition. Those who spoke out against the Kim family were sent to prison camps, defectors say, along with their parents and children.

The country's leadership maintained a ban on most communication: Most North Koreans, even now, have no access to the Internet.

Several hundred thousand North Koreans now have cellphones, but they

Several hundred thousand North Koreans now have cellphones, but they can make only domestic calls.

Bond forged in military, high school Recruit finds teacher among his peers

By David Mekeel Reading Eagle



WASHINGTON, December 19, 2011--When Kyle Nelson inked his name to a contract signing him up for the Army Reserves, he wasn't sure what to expect.

Would boot camp be hard? Would his commanding officers be tough? What would his fellow soldiers be like?

But even in his wildest imagination, he couldn't have predicted what he would discover while chatting with one of his new sergeants.

"We were just chatting and he said, 'I teach at Reading High,'" Nelson said. "And I looked at him and said, 'Oh, I go to Reading High.'"

Nelson, 18, a senior, had never crossed paths with biology teacher Charles Mullin as each traversed the cavernous halls of Reading High. But finding themselves together in the same reserve unit - both electric generator mechanics in the Allentown-based 130th Chemical Company - the pair have formed a unique bond.

Nelson said it was hard when he first signed up to shift from military mode to student.

"It was difficult at first," he said. "It was weird coming from basic training back to school, all the basic freedoms you missed."

And most of his friends, Nelson said, can't quite figure out his decision.

"They think I'm crazy," he said with a laugh.

But Mullin doesn't. He knows exactly what serving is all about.

That's why Mullin has taken Nelson under his wing, helping not only with his military life but his school-work as well.

"I think it will help sustain him," Mullin, 51, of Cressona, Schuylkill County, said of his mentoring. "The Army is all about being a supportive environment, and I'm trying to support him on many levels."

Nelson said his interaction with

Mullin at school was a little strange at first. The young private would instinctively straighten up a bit when they crossed paths and found it tough not to always call him sergeant.

But the relationship has paid off, Nelson said. Mullin has helped him pull up his sagging grades, he said, enough that he was even able to join the bowling team.

"Without him I wouldn't be able to do anything I'm doing," Nelson said.

Nelson has been so affected by the help Mullin has given him that he's decided to try to do some mentoring of his own. He said he's spoken with other young recruits preparing to go through basic training.

"I went into basic blind," he said. "The first couple of weeks I was lost. I wish there had been someone there to let me know what to expect, that's what I'm trying to do."

Nelson is preparing to graduate in the spring. He said he'll use the roughly \$30,000 the Army has given him for education to go to a trade school. Contact David Mekeel: 610-371-5014 or dmekeel@readingeagle.com.

New Help line for Military Families Vets4Warriors, Launches

By Colleen Flaherty Fort Hood Herald



FORT HOOD, New Jersey, December 20, 2011--A new, New Jersey-based telephone and Internet support line for Fort Hood families and soldiers took its first call last week.

Vets4Warriors, staffed entirely by veterans, plus two military spouses, aims to provide 24-hour peer assistance to struggling community members, said Christopher Kosseff, head of the behavioral health division at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, where the line is based.

"There are unique challenges to military life that are best understood by someone who's been through that life, who's lived that life," he said. "It doesn't mean that other people can't understand, but it's often easier for someone who's been through it to understand it."

It's not a clinical help line, Kosseff

said, but a way for Army family members to talk things out with someone who understands the structure, lingo and demands of military life.

Kosseff had been overseeing the similar Vet2Vet telephone help line for members of the New Jersey National Guard and Reserves when he heard of three suicides and one murder involving Fort Hood soldiers at the end of September.

The line had taken more than 17,000 calls in its six years of operation, Kosseff said in a recent telephone interview, and he thought it might be of use to the Fort Hood community.

Through military contacts he'd made over the years, Kosseff began corresponding with Col. Steven Braverman, commander of Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center.

Braverman liked the idea of a Vet2Vet-type program for Fort Hood soldiers, he said, because peer handlers could "connect well with our soldiers."

The program would also be monitored by a "respected academic institution," he said, and although calls would be answered in New Jersey, callers in need of face-to-face or immediate assistance could be connected to Fort Hood-area behavioral health staff.

Because the program was already going strong in Piscataway, N.J., it didn't take long to incorporate Fort Hood, Kosseff said.

The university hired and trained new staff members, mostly combat veterans, to handle a variety of caller needs. Vets4Warriors is paid for by the university.

Most of the handlers are not clinicians, Kosseff said, but can connect callers with clinical needs to on-the-ground resources.

Other callers might simply need someone to "talk it out" with for days, weeks, months or even years — however long it takes, program coordinator Chuck Arnold said.

Arnold is a licensed counselor and Vietnam War veteran. Because of his experiences, can relate to callers who are experiencing "the big four" for combat veterans, he said: depression, anxiety, anger and excessive alcohol consumption. Other problems, such as sleeplessness, lack of appetite and hypervigilance usually stem from one of the four categories, he said.

Other common caller concerns are financial and marital woes, he said. Callers to the service are not obligated to give their names or contact informa-

tion, Arnold said, but many usually do after they build a rapport with their handlers. The program encourages callers to stick with the same one as long as they need to.

Users can call a toll-free number or go to the program's website to initiate a live chat. A real, live person will answer at all hours of the day and night, Arnold said.

Although the 12 Vets4Warriors staff members are trained to handle crisis calls, the service is not a suicide hotline, Kosseff said.

"The idea is to get people to call early," he said. "We want to try to intervene and work with someone before it's a real crisis."

For Braverman, Vets4Warriors can bridge a gap between "resilience and the need for diagnostic and therapeutic behavioral health services."

"This program expands the tool kit we have available to support our soldiers as they and their families struggle with the stressors of Army life," he said.

Contact Colleen Flaherty at colleenf@kdhnews.com or (254) 501-7559. Follow her on Twitter at KDH To learn more about Vets4Warriors, or to speak with a counselor, service and family members can call the Vets4Warriors toll-free hotline at 1-855-VET-TALK (838-8255) or go to the Vets4Warriors website.

Panetta 'Will Not Tolerate' Bullying, Hazing

By Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, December 28, 2011--Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta added a pointed anti-bullying directive to a message sent Dec. 23 to service members around the world.

"I cannot be more proud of who you are and what you represent as you serve and sacrifice for our great nation," the message read, in part. "With that honor, is the responsibility to show by example our core values that demand we treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times."

"In that vein, let me be clear," the secretary continued. "I will not tolerate any instance where one service member inflicts any form of physical

or psychological abuse that degrades, insults, dehumanizes or injures another service member."

Panetta directed military commanders to —personally review policies and ensure compliance.

"This has my personal attention, as we continue our combat mission in Afghanistan, transition from our campaign in Iraq, and continue our global presence performing our nation's duties," the secretary wrote.

"I need you to continue to make this a priority within your commands as this has a direct impact on our force readiness."

Members of the Defense Department and the services "will protect each other through fair, scrupulous, and unbiased treatment as individuals -- caring for them, teaching them and leading them," Panetta wrote.

"It is the obligation of each member in the chain of command to ensure hazing is not allowed and that all service members are treated, at all times, with genuine dignity, fairness, and respect."

The Army Dec. 21 charged eight soldiers allegedly involved in the death of Army Pvt. Danny Chen. Chen, an infantryman deployed to southern Afghanistan with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, was found dead in a guard tower Oct. 3 from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also spoke out strongly against hazing and bullying after the charges were announced. In a message posted to Facebook and Twitter Dec. 22, he wrote that while instances of hazing appear to be isolated, the practice is "simply intolerable."

"It undermines our values, tarnishes our profession and erodes the trust that bonds us," the chairman added.

The secretary's message also made clear that hazing and bullying are inconsistent with military values.

"The few that choose the wrong path cast a negative light on our collective ethos, our service, and all that we represent," Panetta wrote.

The message closed, as it opened, with the secretary thanking troops and expressing his good wishes for them and their families throughout the New Year.

8 U.S. Soldiers charged in death of comrade in Afghanistan

By Ernesto Londoño and Christian Davenport



KABUL, Afghanistan, December 21, 2011 — The U.S. Army, which has struggled in recent years to combat a mounting suicide toll, took an unusual step when

it announced Wednesday that it had charged eight American soldiers serving in Afghanistan in connection with the apparent suicide of one of their lower-ranking comrades.

The charges in the death of Pvt. Danny Chen, a 19-year-old infantryman from New York City, came after a vigorous, weeks-long campaign by advocacy groups and family members hoping to pressure the Pentagon to investigate allegations that Chen had been the subject of hazing within the ranks and had been repeatedly taunted with racial slurs.

Speaking through a family friend acting as an interpreter, the mother of Danny Chen talks about how she feels after news broke that the Army has charged 8 soldiers in connection with her son's death.

Eight U.S. Soldiers have been charged in the death of Danny Chen, a Chinese-American who apparently shot himself in Afghanistan after being subjected to what a community activist said were assaults and ethnic taunts from his comrades. (Dec. 21)

Faces of the fallen
View more

On Oct. 3, Chen was found dead in a guard tower at a small combat outpost in Kandahar province. He was killed by an "apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound," according to a statement by the NATO command in southern Afghanistan.

Although the exact circumstances of his death are unclear, advocates speaking for his family said Wednesday that regardless of who fired the bullet that killed Chen, the soldiers who allegedly mistreated him are responsible.

"Whether suicide or not, the actions of these people led to his death, and they must be prosecuted for killing him," said Liz Ou-Yang, a Chinese American activist who pushed for an investigation of Chen's death. "There can be no plea-bargaining — they must

be tried in the death of Danny Chen.” After more than two months of agonizing over the family’s loss, “it’s of some comfort and relief to learn that the

Army is taking this seriously,” said Chen’s mother, Su Zhen Chen, in a Manhattan news conference organized by OuYang. Speaking through an interpreter, she said she hopes that “the truth will come out and that what happened will not be repeated.” The soldier’s father, Yen Tao Chen, said the military’s action “gives us some hope.”

Military officials declined Wednesday to release documents detailing the charges against the soldiers and did not give an account of the events that led to Chen’s death. But a spokesman for the Army’s Criminal Investigation Command said the probe into how Chen died includes “the circumstances leading up to his death.”

The Army said 1st Lt. Daniel J. Schwartz, Staff Sgt. Blaine G. Dugas, Staff Sgt. Andrew J. Van Bockel, Sgt. Adam M. Holcomb, Sgt. Jeffrey T. Hurst, Spec. Thomas P. Curtis, Spec. Ryan J. Offutt and Sgt. Travis F. Carden had been charged with counts that include dereliction of duty, making a false statement, assault, negligent homicide and reckless endangerment. Reached Wednesday, some family members of the accused said they were shocked to hear of the charges.

Sheila Dugas, the mother of Blaine Dugas, said the allegations are “completely out of character” for her son. “He was always just taking care of his boys, his troops.”

Bretta Von Bockel, hearing the news about the accusations against her brother for the first time, said she could not believe it. “We worry about him every day,” she said.

Rarely have service members been charged in connection with a comrade’s suicide. If Chen did take his own life, he would be the second Asian American known to have done so this year after apparently being mistreated by his comrades. Marine Lance Cpl. Harry Lew, 21, shot himself April 3 after being hazed the night before by fellow service members, the Marine Corps Times reported.



Hazing-related charges in GI’s death could be difficult to prove

By Bill Murphy Jr., Stars and Stripes



WASHINGTON, December 28, 2011 — A low-ranking soldier is hazed and mistreated by his fellow troops and even his leaders.

He commits suicide. The military investigates.

Are his tormentors legally responsible for his death?

Last week, the Army charged eight soldiers in the hazing and death of Pvt. Danny Chen, 19, who the Army said was found dead of an “apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound” in an Afghanistan guard tower in October.



Five of the eight troops face involuntary manslaughter and negligent homicide charges.

The Army hasn’t released details of its investigation but the array of charges suggests a theory that Chen was driven to suicide by his tormentors’ abuse.

An Army official told Chen’s family that he had been beaten by superiors and subjected to racially motivated taunts, according to an October story in The New York Times.

The charges appear to indicate the military is looking to make an example of the eight soldiers, to show that hazing will not be tolerated, legal experts say, but they also believe that the most severe charges will be difficult to prove.

“There are a number of cases that have been reported in the criminal justice system where people have committed suicide after harassment ... and a homicide charge is almost never suc-

cessful,” said Ralph M. Stein, a Pace University law professor who served as an Army intelligence officer in the 1960s. “The only way you’re getting that up to manslaughter ... is if the person has clearly indicated that they’ve been pushed beyond a certain point. I don’t think we’ve got it with this case.”

“It’s going to be a nightmare from a proof perspective for the judge advocate, especially if you try the case in Afghanistan with a jury that’s been in combat,” said Charles Rose, a law professor at Stetson University who retired as a colonel in the Army JAG Corps in 2004 and co-authored the book “Military Crimes and Defenses.”

“It can be done, but it’s a real logical leap,” Rose continued. “If nothing else, it sends a message from a discipline perspective.”

Last week’s charges came amid continuing concern over suicides in the military. According to a recent report from the Center for a New American Security, 1 to 2 percent of military suicides and 4 to 5 percent of military suicide attempts “involve hazing in the unit or military workplace.” Through the end of November, 154 active-duty soldiers and 32 Marines had taken their own lives. The Air Force counted 41 suicides through Dec. 21, and the Navy recorded 46 suicides through Dec. 6.

A month before Chen’s death, Marine Lance Cpl. Harry Lew killed himself in Afghanistan after being berated and assaulted by three Marines, according to charges filed in that case.

Earlier this year, a Stars and Stripes investigative report brought to light the case of Spc. Brushaun Anderson, who shot himself in a portable toilet in Iraq on New Year’s Day 2010 after enduring “cruel, abusive and oppressive treatment,” according to an Army investigation. Anderson’s leaders, whom the Army deemed responsible for the maltreatment, escaped criminal charges and were essentially let off with a slap on the wrist.

The difference in Chen’s case, lawyers said, is that his family has been at the center of media attention.

About 500 protesters marched and held a candlelight vigil in Chinatown in Manhattan on Dec. 15. “Let’s not kid ourselves,” said Matthew Tully, a New York lawyer who is also a lieutenant colonel in the New York National Guard and served on active duty as an artillery officer in the late 1990s at Fort Sill and in South Korea.

“If it wasn’t for the involvement of

the Chen family in New York City, this would not be where it is right now.”

‘Product of this system’

Beyond the circumstances of Chen’s death is the question of how much hazing truly goes on in the military.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta added an anti-hazing mandate to his holiday message to troops worldwide, while Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on his Twitter and Facebook pages that the military is “investigating several allegations of hazing within our ranks,” which he called “intolerable.”

“Every servicemember should be aware that participating in hazing or even observing it without reporting it are both wrong,” Dempsey’s statement said.

But some current and former soldiers and Marines said hazing isn’t just common, it’s built into the fabric of the military culture — especially in combat units.

“If anybody says there’s no hazing in the military, they’re not serving with infantry units and field artillery units and combat units,” Tully said.

He added that he defended a lieutenant colonel in a hazing case in 2004 or 2005 and got the charges reduced to a letter of reprimand that meant the officer could retire.

“Within the Marine Corps infantry especially, I feel like hazing is really a staple of that culture,” said Maximilian Uriarte, 25, who served as an assaultman with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines during two tours in Iraq between 2007 and 2009.

Uriarte, who left active duty with the Marines in 2010, writes the online comic strip “Terminal Lance,” which pokes fun at the Marine Corps “with an emphasis on the grunt lance corporal’s point of view.”

“It happens all the time,” Uriarte said. “It’s part of the way Marines are brought up. Without hazing, it wouldn’t be the infantry.”

Nevertheless, Uriarte said that as he gained more seniority after his two combat deployments, he resisted the idea of hazing newer Marines, known as “boots.”

“There’s a fine line between hazing and acceptable training and punishment,” Uriarte said, and he cited examples of things he thought were excessive. “Guys would make people ... drink water until they puke,” he recalled, or “make people wear their

flak jacket and put on their sleeping bag and stuff to make it really hot until they pass out.”

He sounded disgusted by the idea of a soldier being hazed to the point of suicide. “They should definitely be punished,” he said. “Somebody needs to be held responsible. But the counter of course is if these guys that were hazing him were a product of this system that they were brought up in. Who do you blame at that point?”

‘Didn’t see this coming’

Chen was an only child, the son of Chinese immigrants who do not speak English.

“They were really sad that they don’t know why Danny passed away,” family friend Raymond Dong, 19, who had known Chen since third grade, told Stars and Stripes. —That they found the people responsible,” Dong said, “they feel a lot better.”

Dong said Chen was the only one of their friends who joined the military, and that he enlisted rather than accept a full scholarship offer to Baruch College, a highly competitive public university in Manhattan. The two friends last chatted over Facebook on Sept. 27, just six days before Chen’s death. In letters from Chen read publicly at the candlelight vigil earlier this month, the young soldier confided that he was regularly teased because of his Chinese heritage and he lamented that he’d run out of jokes to fire back in response.

“He’d only been there two months,” Dong said. “Danny was a funny guy, you know? He liked to joke around, and he [was] very dedicated to what he does. Very smart in school. ... He said he wanted to do something new in life. I told him not to join because it’s a risk. But I didn’t see this coming.”

Convictions In Fort Dix Plot Are Upheld

By Geoff Mulvihill, Associated Press



TRENTON, N.J., December 29, 2011 A federal appeals panel on Wednesday upheld the convictions and sentences of five Muslim men accused of planning to attack Fort Dix or other military bases, though it threw out a charge

against one defendant.

The main issue was prosecutors’ use of wiretaps obtained under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a part of the Patriot Act aimed largely at gathering foreign intelligence.

The recordings were a major piece of a 2½-month trial for the five men, including three Muslim brothers from Cherry Hill.

The men — Mohamad Shnewer, Serdar Tatar, and brothers Dritan, Eljvir and Shain Duka — were arrested in May 2007. In 2008, a federal jury in Camden, convicted them of conspiring to kill U.S. military personnel at Fort Dix. All but Tatar are serving life terms.

Defense lawyers said it was unconstitutional to use the recordings in a domestic criminal case and that it may have been impossible to convict the men without the evidence.

But in a unanimous ruling written by Judge Marjorie O. Rendell, a three-judge panel of the Philadelphia-based Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed. The challenged search — was conducted in objectively reasonable reliance on a duly authorized statute,¹ and therefore admissible at trial, Rendell wrote.

Another major issue came from an error that federal prosecutors acknowledged in January: Three of the men were convicted of attempted possession of firearms in furtherance of a crime, but the law in question does not have a provision that outlaws attempted possession.

In the case of that count against Dritan and Shain Duka, the judges said defense lawyers should have raised it before the trial judge.

Since they didn’t, the judges said, it should not be overturned. The judges also said that there was evidence at trial that the two actually possessed weapons.

But the case of Shnewer was different.

The court ruled that there was no evidence he possessed the weapons. As a result, his weapons conviction was dismissed, along with the 30-year prison term that

went with it.

He is still serving a life term.

Richard Sparaco, a lawyer for Tatar, said Wednesday that he would consult with his client but expected he would file an appeal. Rocco Cipparone, who represents Shnewer, said he would likely pursue an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court on the parts of the conviction that were upheld.

Book: Petraeus almost quit over Afghan draw-down

By Kimberly Dozier, AP Intelligence Writer



WASHINGTON (AP), December 29, 2011— Four-star general-turned-CIA director David Petraeus almost resigned as Afghanistan war commander over President Barack Obama's decision to quickly draw down surge forces, according to a new insider's look at Petraeus' 37-year Army career.

Petraeus decided that resigning would be a "selfish, grandstanding move with huge political ramifications" and that now was "time to salute and carry on," according to a forthcoming biography. Author and Petraeus confidante Paula Broadwell had extensive access to the Washington for "All In: The Education of General David Petraeus," due from Penguin Press in January. The Associated Press was given an advance copy.

The book traces Petraeus' career from West Point cadet to his command of two wars deemed unwinnable: Iraq and Afghanistan. Co-authored with The Washington Post's Vernon Loeb, the nearly 400-page book is part history lesson through Petraeus' eyes, part hagiography and part defense of the counterinsurgency strategy he applied in both wars.

In this June 23, 2011 file photo, CIA Director nominee Gen. David Petraeus testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, before the Senate Intelligence Committee during a hearing on his nomination. A new book says general-turned-CIA director David Petraeus almost quit over President Barack Obama's decision to quickly draw down

forces from Afghanistan.
AP Photo/Cliff Owen, File

Critics of counterinsurgency argue the strategy has not yet proved a success, with violence spiking in Iraq after the departure of U.S. troops, and Afghan local forces deemed ill-prepared to take over by the 2014 deadline. The book unapologetically casts Petraeus in the hero's role, as in this description of the Afghanistan campaign: "There was a new strategic force released on Kabul: Petraeus' will." Broadwell does acknowledge that Petraeus rubs some people the wrong way.

"His critics fault him for ambition and self-promotion," she writes. But she adds that "his energy, optimism and will to win stand out more for me." The book also is peppered with Petraeus quotes that sound like olive branches meant to soothe Obama aides who feared Petraeus would challenge their boss for the White House. "Petraeus tried to make clear that he and Obama were in synch," Broadwell writes of Petraeus' Senate testimony on the Afghan war.

The book describes Petraeus' frustration at still being labeled an outsider from the Obama administration, even as he retired from the military at Obama's request before taking the job last summer as the CIA's 20th director. The book depicts Petraeus' rise at an unrelenting, near-superhuman pace. He starts his career as a fiercely competitive West Point cadet known as "Peaches," where he famously wooed the school superintendent's daughter, Holly Knowlton. He went on to command the 101st Airborne Division as part of the invasion of Iraq, then masterminded the rewrite of the Army and Marine Corps' counterinsurgency training manual before returning to command the surge in Baghdad. He was then appointed to head Central Command, overseeing the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as military affairs across much of the Gulf and the Mideast.

He accepted a cut in authority and pay to lead the Afghanistan war campaign when Gen. Stanley McChrystal was forced to resign after a Rolling Stone article that "scorched the general (McChrystal) and his aides, caricaturing them as testosterone-addled frat boys as they insulted Obama" and other officials, Broadwell writes. She describes how Petraeus' first act was to lift McChrystal's restrictions on

the use of force - especially on air-strikes - if civilians were nearby.

"There is no question about our commitment to reducing civilian loss of life," Petraeus told his staff. There was, however, "a clear moral imperative to make sure we are fully supporting our troops in combat."

Broadwell adds that the problem, according to Petraeus, was less McChrystal's order than how it was even more strictly re-interpreted by lower commanders.

In her account, Petraeus also faults McChrystal for overpromising and underdelivering in places like Taliban-riddled Marjah in the south, producing months of embarrassing headlines that hurt the war effort back in Washington. But the book also includes Petraeus' own Rolling Stone-esque moment, when he was quoted badmouthing the White House in Bob Woodward's latest book, "Obama's Wars." A frustrated Petraeus is described as telling his inner circle, on a flight after a glass of wine, that "the administration was (expletive) with the wrong guy."

"Petraeus later expressed his displeasure to all of them for betraying his confidence," Broadwell wrote. "But he knew he was ultimately responsible for making the intemperate remark," a candid admission, through Broadwell, of his lapse in judgment.

He also concedes the Afghan war is not yet won.

"He had wanted to hand (Marine Corps Gen. John) Allen ... a war that had taken a decisive turn," Broadwell writes of what had been Petraeus' goal for his successor. "He knew that, despite the hard-fought progress, that wasn't yet the case."

Yet that admission also presents a get-out clause when combined with the book's account that he considered resigning over the rapid drawdown of troops, neatly removing Petraeus from responsibility if the war goes wrong. And the account does nothing to puncture the mythology his troops built up around him, something an early mentor, retired Gen. Jack Galvin, told Petraeus to embrace.

"They want you to be bigger than you are, so they magnify you," Galvin said in an interview with Broadwell.

"Live up to it all with the highest standards of integrity. You become part of a legend."

"All In" fits neatly into that.

Army resumes competitive grading on junior officer evaluation forms

By Bill Murphy, Stars and Stripes



WASHINGTON, September 19, 2011— The Army's revised Officer Evaluation Report once again will grade junior officers and warrant officers against their peers, a change that could significantly affect promotion prospects for the nearly 60,000 active-duty captains, lieutenants, chief warrant officers two and warrant officers, as well as their reserve counterparts.

Beginning Nov. 1, they will be be rated as above, below or within the "center of mass" of their peers.

Their senior raters, who are most often colonels, may rate no more than 49 percent in the "top block." The rest have to be described as either "center of mass" or "below center of mass."

The reinstatement comes seven years after the Army eliminated the "center of mass" evaluation requirement for company grade officers.

"It facilitates honest feedback between the rated officer and his rating chain, and reinstates senior rater accountability for company grade officers," said George Piccirilli, chief of the Army's Evaluation, Selection and Promotion Division, part of U.S. Army Human Resources Command at Fort Knox, Ky. "It provides more information to identify the Army's best talent while supporting future Army action as selection rates start decreasing."

The Army has 30,017 captains, 9,149 first lieutenants, 10,321 second lieutenants, 6,598 in the rank of chief warrant officer, two, and 2,387 in the rank of warrant officer. All will be affected by the change, along with their peers in the National Guard and Army Reserve.

Among other changes to the Officer Evaluation Report, commonly referred to as an OER, which apply to all officers:

- The report will indicate whether company grade officers have begun a 360-degree feedback process, in which they are supposed to ask peers and subordinates for input on their performance. However, Piccirilli emphasized that the results of that feedback are not included on the of-

ficial evaluation.

"We want to keep it developmental," he said. "It has no impact on your evaluation."

- Senior raters will be required to list the next three jobs that they believe the officer is qualified for, as opposed to simply listing jobs that they might be qualified for later in their careers.

Under "future assignments" we've seen captains as future brigade commanders [and] lieutenants as the next corps commander," Piccirilli said.

- "We're just trying to get the next three assignments. That can be used at HRC as well as a good mechanism for the officer, to say, 'This is what I should be targeting.'"

Officers whose raters change in the middle of an evaluation period will be able to wait until the end of their regular evaluation period before getting another OER, provided that their senior rater remains the same.

Additionally, rating officers will no longer be required to use an official OER Support Form in order to counsel their subordinates and write the OERs themselves.

Officers who have questions about the changes can contact Army Human Resources Command directly at 1-888-276-9472, or via email at askhrc.army@us.army.mil

Army to trim NCO ranks starting in April, memo says

By Mark Patton, Stars and Stripes



WIESBADEN, Germany, December 28, 2011— The Army plans to trim its enlisted ranks of staff sergeant and above starting in April according to a Nov. 14 memorandum.

The memo, signed by Thomas R. Lamont, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs, says the Army will use the Qualitative Service Program to identify noncommissioned officers for involuntary early separation from active duty.

Army spokesman Lt. Col. Timothy Beninato wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes that the memo was "inadvertently distributed" and added that details are still being refined. He said specifics should be released in the

coming weeks.

Troops will be evaluated for early separation based on three board processes, according to the memo.

The first board, affecting the ranks of sergeants first class and above, will consider senior NCOs "for denial of continued service whose performance, conduct, and/or potential for advancement may not meet Army standards."

The other two boards will target staff sergeants and above who are in a job "where the 12-month operating strength projections exceed 100 percent" and in jobs where the time it takes a soldier to get promoted exceeds the Army standard.

The memo states that staff sergeants will have the opportunity to switch to a job that is short-staffed. Army spokesman Paul Prince cited former Defense Secretary Robert Gates' directive to trim the

Army's ranks of 27,000 soldiers, beginning in 2015.

"In light of this decision, the Army is analyzing the requirements of future force in a time of decreased resources to determine the overall makeup of the force, to include the disposition of all

Army capabilities and units," Prince wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes. George Wright, another Army spokesman, said the Army has a range of options with which to manage personnel strength and many were used in the early 1990s to manage levels.



Army NCO Academy graduate receives his E-7 stripes. Photo by Wayne Cook/COURTESY U.S. ARMY




<http://hqdaep.army.mil>

Winter Weather Preparedness

Security & Safety Directorate
Emergency Preparedness Program

Weather Advisory

In the event a winter weather advisory is issued for the National Capital Region, please consider the following:

Weather related closings affecting the Pentagon reservation are made by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and can be found on www.opm.gov/status or by calling 202-606-1900.



Government closures due to severe weather are reported to local television and radio stations.

There are agencies who do **NOT** follow the OPM weather decision. OPM advises agencies outside the Beltway to make their own decisions, "since they are subject to different weather and traffic conditions than those inside the beltway." (See www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissal.pdf for more information)

Military installation statuses will be decided as early as practicable based on the post's road conditions and weather.



Information is also posted to the Office of the Administrative Assistant (OAA) Facebook and Twitter pages at www.facebook.com/OAA.Army, www.twitter.com/oaa_army.

OPM DC Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures

Dec 2011 the Office of Personnel Management updated the DC Area dismissal and closure procedures. The OPM's goal is to maintain continuity operations while ensuring the safety of Federal employees and the general public.

www.opm.gov/status/notices/index.asp

Staggered Early Departure—Employees should depart XX hour (s) earlier than their normal departure time.

Depart No Later Than—Employees must be out of the office by a specific time.

Shelter-In-Place—Remain in office or take immediate shelter. Only used in extreme circum-

stances to communicate to agencies, employees and the public that offices are temporarily closed.

Immediate Departure—Only used as a last resort.

Guidance applies to offices located inside the beltway. Offices outside the beltway may be subject to different weather and traffic conditions.

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



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

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

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

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 Commercial Phone: 410-436-2230 Fax: 410-436-3086 DSN: 584-2230
<https://ccc.apgea.army.mil>

To Register, click here: https://ccc.apgea.army.mil/courses/in_house/CBRNE.htm

AR-MEDCOM Public Affairs products are available on the web. Visit: <http://www.dvidshub.net/units/AR-MEDCOM>. The Army Makes You Strong, We Make It Known!



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 6, 2011

CONTACT: Beth Sherman
703-696-1171, ext. 539

ESGR-PA@osd.mil

**DoD CALLS ON GUARD AND RESERVE MEMBERS TO NOMINATE SUPPORTIVE
EMPLOYERS FOR 2012 FREEDOM AWARD**
410 Army Reserve members submit nominations at the halfway mark

ARLINGTON, Va. – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense agency, encourages Guard and Reserve members to nominate their supportive employers for the 2012 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award as only five weeks remain until the deadline. The Freedom Award is the DoD's highest award for civilian employers supporting Guard and Reserve members. As our nation faces ongoing national security demands, it is critically important to recognize employers that go above and beyond in their support of Guard and Reserve members and promote their support as a model for others to follow.

More than 1,700 service members have submitted nominations since November 1; 410 of those nominations came from members of the Army Reserve. Service members who have yet to nominate their employers are urged to do so now. Nominations may be submitted by service members, or a family member acting on their behalf, at www.FreedomAward.mil through January 16, 2012.

"At a time when news of our economic situation is often told in grim terms and negative numbers, the untold stories highlighting thousands of employers showing extraordinary support to their Guard and Reserve employees and their families are really important," said James Rebholz, ESGR National Chair. "Employers' steadfast commitment deserves our recognition and heartfelt gratitude. We are looking to our individual Guard and Reserve members to nominate their employers who are most deserving of the Department's highest honor -- the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award."

The 2012 recipients will be announced in early summer and honored in Washington, DC during a special ceremony next fall. All employers – large, small and public – are eligible for nomination. Recipients for the 2011 Freedom Award included diverse employers such as an automotive industry leader, national financial services company, two sheriff's departments, an Arizona town, and a church.

About Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and the Freedom Award:

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. In the years since, 160 employers have been honored with the award. ESGR was established in 1972 to develop and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers. Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.

For questions or interviews regarding the Freedom Award, please visit www.FreedomAward.mil or contact Beth Sherman, ESGR Public Affairs, at 703-696-1171, ext. 539 or by email at ESGR-PA@osd.mil.

--- DURING DEPLOYMENT ---

**Cute,
aren't they?**

**BUT THEY COULD BE
DEADLY!**

ABOUT RABIES

HOW CAN YOU TELL?

You cannot always tell if an animal has **RABIES**.

Not all animals with rabies look sick or act strange.

BE SAFE!

Do not approach, feed or handle wild or stray animals.

Do not keep pets or mascots when deployed.

If you are **BITTEN** or if an **ANIMAL'S SALIVA** contacts your broken skin, eyes or mouth, immediately wash the area with soap and water and seek medical attention.



Look for more information on rabies
<http://www.usaphc.army.mil/rabies>



CPA-121-0811

Army Medicine Seeks To ID, Treat Soldiers Potentially Exposed to Rabies Virus

A Fort Drum, N.Y. Soldier, who recently returned from Afghanistan, died from rabies after contracting the disease from a feral dog while deployed.

The Army has initiated an investigation to ensure that other service members who may have been exposed to rabies are identified and receive preventive treatment, if needed.

The Army Medical Department along with the Department of Defense (DOD), other uniformed services and the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working together to expeditiously identify, evaluate and treat any service members, DOD civilians and contractors who may have been exposed to rabies while deployed. Individuals who have already been identified as being exposed to the disease while deployed are currently receiving appropriate evaluation and treatment.

The importance of receiving appropriate medical evaluation following contact with a feral/stray animal cannot be overstated. Rabies may not show any signs or symptoms in the infected animal until late in the disease, often just days before its death. The animal can, however, still spread the deadly virus while appearing completely normal.

The rabies virus is transmitted to humans by the saliva of infected animals through bite wounds, contact with mucous membranes or broken skin. Humans can become infected and harbor the virus for weeks to months, and in extremely rare cases, years before becoming ill. During this incubation period, which averages between one and three months, rabies can be prevented with appropriate treatment, including a series of vaccinations. Once symptoms occur, however, death is almost always certain.

All previously deployed Service Members, since March 2010 (Active or Reserve Component, as well as those recently discharged from military service); DOD civilians and contractors who have had contact with a feral/stray animal while deployed should be immediately evaluated by medical personnel. Army Medicine and the DOD are committed to ensuring that anyone who believes they may have been exposed while deployed is provided with appropriate medical evaluation and care.

The Army Medical Department and the DOD is dedicated to ensuring the health and well-being of all Service Members, DOD civilians and contractors.

We ask the friends and families of those returning from a deployment after March 2010 to encourage anyone that may have been exposed to seek medical attention, even if no symptoms are readily apparent.

Call the Wounded Warrior & Family Hotline at 1-800-984-8523 (Stateside DSN: 421-3700 or Overseas DSN: 312-421-3700) for information on obtaining a medical evaluation and, if necessary, treatment.

INFORMATION PAPER

AFRC-PRM-I

13 October 2011

SUBJECT: Update on the IDT Travel Reimbursement

1. Purpose. Apprise the DCAR on the law as it concerns IDT Travel Reimbursement
2. Points or Facts.
 - a. NDAA 2008 provided authority for reimbursement of travel expenses of up to \$300 for Soldiers traveling to an IDT location that is outside the normal commuting distance and meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - (1) Qualified in a skill designated as critically short
 - (2) Assigned to a unit of the selected reserve with a critical staffing or pay grade shortage
 - (3) Assigned to a Unit that is disestablished or relocated because of BRAC or other force structure realignment.
 - b. ALARACT 249/2008 identified normal commuting distance as not less than 150 miles one way IAW JFTR. It also stated that the IDT must be a minimum of two periods, four hours in length, but not necessarily in the same day. (See attached ALARACT message)
 - c. NDAA 2010 extended IDT travel reimbursement for travel up to 31 Dec 11. As of this date, the program does not extend beyond 31 Dec 11. OSD proposed FY12 NDAA legislation to reduce the 150 miles commuting distance and to extend the program to 31 Dec 12. LTG Lynch (IMCOM) expressed concern to LTG Stultz that the NDAA 2012 proposal could drive costs to a level that AR could not implement.
 - d. Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year (FY), the CAR must identify the Soldier population for consideration to receive IDT travel reimbursement along with any additional requests as deemed appropriate to the Assistant Secretary of The Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA (M&RA)).
3. Current status. The AR does not have a current policy or allocated funding to implement the IDT Travel Reimbursement program. OCAR PA&E could fund the program in POM14-18 following validation and cost estimate of program requirements.
4. Staff position. We recommended more analysis before submitting any proposal to implement the IDT Travel Reimbursement program at this time.

MAJ Joseph Tsagronis/(910) 570-8744

Director/Chief Approved _____ (optional)

is a strong support team

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Chain of Command

Coach

Chaplain

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK (8255)



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You can also follow us at http://twitter.com/AR_MEDCOM or visit our website at <http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/armedcom>. We are also now on Facebook.com, keyword: Army Reserve Medical Command (Official PAO Page).

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*From: The Army Reserve Medical Command
To: The Soldiers, Families, and Civilians of the AR-MEDCOM*

