



SOUTHCOM QUALITY OF LIFE (SCQL) MAILER MAY 2003

PERSONNEL, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING ISSUES

ARMY:

Captain Promotion Pin-on Point Increased to 40 Months

by Bruce Anderson

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 2, 2003) -- *The Army has raised the time-in-service requirement for promotion to captain from 38 months back to 40 months, effective April 1.*

With the increase, the Army begins an incremental return to the 42-month requirement that existed prior to October. "The higher requirement provides more time for junior officers to prepare for the responsibilities associated with the rank of captain," said Maj. Patrick T. Budjenska, personnel policy integrator, G1. ***In October, the Army started promoting officers to captain after only 38 months of service. The Fiscal Year 2002 Defense Authorization Act authorized the promotions after 36 months, but the Army opted for 38 months to give junior officers as much training as possible before promoting them to captain. This accelerated promotion was one facet of the Army's campaign to alleviate a shortage of captains.*** The shortage was the result of an under-accession of lieutenants in the early 1990s, which was compounded by attrition during the booming economy of the late 1990s, said personnel officials. The Army can begin the move back to longer development for its lieutenants because it has exceeded its goal for the number of captains on active duty. In the six months since reducing the pin-on point to 38 months, 700 more captains elected to remain in the service than was the case in previous years. While stop-loss has contributed in a minor way to the increase of the Army's overall officer strength, the major causes for the increase in the number of captains are the accelerated promotion of first lieutenants, lower attrition rates among captains, and an increase in the number of captains returning to active duty. "Officers are foregoing opportunities offered in the civilian job market to remain in the Army and contribute to securing our country," Budjenska said. Commanders also had a lot to do with many of the officers' decision to remain on active duty, Budjenska said. "The increase in retention can be attributed to mentorship and counseling by commanders and leaders at all levels." One other factor in the increase in the number of captains is a marked increase in those who previously separated from the Army and have elected to return to active duty. Since the end of fiscal year 2001, more than 200 captains have returned to active duty.

Army White House Fellows Program, 2004

The Army is seeking highly qualified officers and noncommissioned officers to serve as White House Fellows from September 2004 through August 2005. Soldiers must request and receive permission from their assignment officer/NCO at PERSCOM prior to competing. Qualifications and details are in MILPER Message Number 03-148. The message is posted in the SCJ1-P public folders and is available online at: <http://perscomnd04.army.mil/milpermsgnsf>

Army DA Selection Board to Consider LTCs for COL

The DA Selection Board is scheduled to convene on or about 29 Jul 03 to consider Lieutenant Colonels for promotion to Colonel, Army Competitive Category. MILPER MSG 03-153

COMPETITIVE CATEGORY OPERATIONS	ABOVE ZONE (AZ) LTC DOR 01 JUN 98 AND EARLIER 1 JUN 98	PRIMARY ZONE (PZ) LTC DOR 02 JUN 98 THRU 01 JUN 99 2 JUN 98	BELOW-THE-ZONE (BZ) LTC ADOR 2 JUN 99 THRU 1 MAY 00 2 JUN 99
OPERATIONAL SUPPORT (OS)	AND EARLIER 1 JUN 98	THRU 1 JUN 99 2 JUN 98	THRU 1 MAY 00 2 JUN 99
INFORMATION OPERATIONS (IO)	AND EARLIER 1 JUN 98	THRU 1 JUN 99 2 JUN 98	THRU 1 MAY 00 2 JUN 99
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (IS)	AND EARLIER 1 JUN 98	THRU 1 JUN 99 2 JUN 98	THRU 1 MAY 00 2 JUN 99

Complete-the-Record report is optional by the rater. The required "Thru Date" for Complete-the-Record report (Code 21, Complete Rec) is 23 May 03. Reports must be received at PERSCOM (TAPC-MSE-R), error free by 22 Jul 03. Direct all questions to: DARYL M. KANE, CIV, UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND, SCJ1-P-ARMY DESK, COM: 305-437-1115 DSN: 567-1115, FAX: 305-437-1176 DSN: 567-1176, EMAIL: kaned@hq.southcom.mil
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Army to Merge PERSCOM, Army Reserve Personnel Command

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 9, 2003) -- *The Army announced today that it will create a single command to perform the functions of the current U.S. Total Army Personnel Command in Alexandria, Va., and U.S. Army Reserve Personnel Command in St. Louis, Mo.* PERSCOM and AR-PERSCOM will retain their respective names and unit insignia until a date to be determined, Army officials said.

The new command will integrate the two existing organizations as a multi-component field operating agency under the Army G-1. The Army National Guard will integrate functions, where possible, and the Civilian Personnel Operations Center Management Agency will realign into this FOA at a later date, officials said. The merger is a result of a recommendation from an Army-level Human Resources Integrated Process Team, or HRIPT, that convened last year. That task force made several recommendations affecting FOA-level operational support that have since been approved by Army Secretary Thomas White. In February, the G-1 directed the establishment of a multi-component task force to oversee the implementation of the secretary's decision. The Human Resources Transition Task Force will "concentrate on process re-engineering to support mergers and re-alignment," said Lt. Gen. John Le Moyne, the deputy chief of staff, G-1. The HRIPT recommendations are far-reaching, complex, and involve the active Army, Army Reserve, National Guard, civilians employees and contractors, Le Moyne said. "This will have long-lasting impacts on our Army's future and our support operations," Le Moyne said of the merger. "This is not an easy task." "The organizational realignment of PERSCOM and AR-PERSCOM is a historical milestone in Army Transformation," said Lt. Gen. James Helmly, the chief of Army Reserve. "This integration will serve as the foundation for changing the manner in which we care for the Army's most valuable resource and foundation, its people," "We are excited about the opportunities this realignment represents and will work energetically to fully realize the immense potential improvement this will bring," Helmly said. "We see a tremendous opportunity to improve the quality of personnel support to our soldiers, families and civilian workforce

as we transform the Human Resource functions of our Army," said Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, the director of the Army National Guard. "We believe we can team where appropriate and integrate some of the personnel systems of all Army components to improve customer service while at the same time protecting the state control of our Army National Guard as exercised by the governors and state adjutants general." ***"Establishing a single command for civilian personnel operations will allow for more efficient and effective servicing of the Army's workforce,"*** said David Snyder, the assistant G1 for Civilian Personnel Policy. "While we will face many challenges in making this change, the hard work ahead is the right thing to do for all Army civilian employees worldwide. "This is an opportunity to demonstrate we are 'The Army' and a step closer to being on the objective when the Objective Force arrives." said Maj. Gen. Dorian T. Anderson, executive agent for the effort, during a discussion with the HR Transition Task Force. The HRTTF will plan and execute actions related to postal operations, personnel and civilian pay functions, and other human-resource functions. Other human-resource realignments include: Realigning Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers and Civilian Personnel Operations Centers under CPOCMA; and consolidating policy and operations from all Senior Executive Service personnel under the assistant secretary of the Army (Manpower & Reserve Affairs). More information on the merger is available on the Web at <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/hrc>. (Editor's note: Information taken from a Department of the Army news release.)

Army's First Space Brigade Stands Up

by Maj. Laura Kenney

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (Army News Service, May 2, 2003) - ***Army Space Command activated the service's first and only space brigade April 11 with formation of the 1st Space Brigade (Provisional) in a ceremony held at the command headquarters, Peterson Air Force Base.***

Elements of the brigade's three battalions have been deployed in Iraq and the surrounding theater in support of Marine Expeditionary Force 1, V Corps and Central Command. "This activation represents a huge step forward in the normalization of Space," said Lt. Gen. Joseph M. Cosumano Jr., commanding general, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command. "And what better time to do it, than these historic times we find ourselves in, with Army Space forces deployed on critical missions, supporting the warfighters of Iraqi Freedom. ***"The new 1st Space Brigade (Provisional) is the first and only Space Brigade in the Army. Army Space Command just marked its 15th birthday, although the history of the Army in Space is much longer than that. We've postponed celebrating that anniversary while our soldiers are in harm's way, but, this is still a great time to stand up the new brigade."*** The ceremony itself involved, first, the uncasing and unfurling of the 1st Space Brigade flag by Cosumano. It was posted in the waiting empty stand, already flanked by the Army Space Command and three battalion flags. Then, while the official activation orders were read, Cosumano passed the formal, framed copy of the order to the brigade commander, Col. David Shaffer. The mission of the 1st Space Brigade, as detailed in the order, is to "conduct continuous, global space support, space control and space force enhancement operations in support of U.S. Strategic Command and supported combatant commanders enabling the delivery of decisive combat power." Army Space Command officially came into being April 7, 1988. Its three battalions - the 1st Satellite Control Battalion, ***the 1st Space Battalion and the 193rd Space Battalion, Colorado National Guard - provide satellite communications, force enhancement and early missile warning to the warfighter.*** Shaffer insisted that the honors of the day belonged not to him, as first commander of the first-ever Space Brigade, but to that brigade's deployed soldiers, whom he and Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Reginald Ficklin could only represent.

"Our soldiers are over there, as we speak, doing tremendous things. This ceremony is for them, as they sweat and work around the clock, helping the combatant commanders achieve the spectacular success they have," said Shaffer. Cosumano extended a special welcome to another general officer attending the event, Air Force Maj. Gen. Mason C. Whitney, Adjutant General for Colorado's Army and Air National Guard. "We couldn't be doing the tremendous job we're doing, supporting the warfighter in current operations, without his people. Case in point, the 193rd Space Battalion, activated just before Sept. 11. What a great asset they have been. They, as well as their sister battalions, have been doing a magnificent job in supporting the warfighter, wherever he is deployed." "And make no mistake, we are a crucial part of that war effort," Cosumano said. "We've got Army Space Support Teams and Joint Tactical Ground Stations sections, and a host of other elements providing communications, early missile warning - everything we have in terms of operational capability is involved in current operations. "In OPERATION DESERT STORM, we'd just begun offering the benefits of the Global Positioning System. Today, we're providing force enhancement and force protection. We've come a long way in 15 years, and the stand-up of this brigade today is an indicator of all the challenges we'll meet in the future," Cosumano concluded. Shaffer addressed those future challenges: "Today's activation as a provisional unit is a major step in the process to becoming a permanent Army unit. The great thing about today is that it opens the door to expansion. By increasing the size of the brigade, we increase the support we give to the warfighter. This ceremony, unlike that of a change of command, which is all about welcoming a new commander and saying farewell to the outgoing, this ceremony is about the unit, about its soldiers, past, present and future," said Shaffer. Under Army regulations, a provisional unit may be organized and designated by the commander of an Army field command. Provisional units may be organized for a limited period of time, not to exceed two years. At the end of the two-year period, the commander will make a recommendation whether or not to permanently organize the unit. (Editor's note: Maj. Laura Kenney is a member of the Army Space Command public affairs team.)

AIR FORCE:

Thrift Savings Plan Open Season, 15 Apr to 30 Jun

04/05/03 - **RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) -- *Civilian and military employees can sign up for or change Thrift Savings Plan accounts during "open season" from April 15 to June 30.***

"TSP is an easy, long-term retirement savings plan that everyone should consider," said Maj. Alessandra Stokstad, chief of the Air Force Personnel Center's contact center here. "Current account holders might be interested, too, in transferring money from one fund to another -- the TSP folks are set up to handle that." "Either way it's a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans," said Stokstad. "It's important to note that TSP is not limited to investing in stocks. People can choose safer government securities as well." "Employees already contributing to the TSP are encouraged to review their TSP plan and account balances," said Janet Thomas of the center's civilian benefits and entitlements service team, "as the open-season period is the best time to open an account or make changes to an existing one." TSP offers investors the chance for lower taxes each year they contribute while not having to pay taxes on earnings until they reach retirement. "You can take out loans and make withdrawals from your TSP account," said Thomas. "And you can keep your account even if you leave military or federal service." Investment money is deposited directly from each paycheck "so you never have to think about it," said Stokstad. "That makes it easy to 'pay yourself first' while only investing what you deem appropriate." The five TSP funds are: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund; the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund; the Fixed Income Index Investment (F)

Fund; the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund; and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund. "As with any individual retirement account, the sooner you begin contributing, the better," said Stokstad. Account changes made on or before May 31 will take effect June 1 for both military members and civilians. Changes made on or after June 1 will become effective in the following pay period for civilians and the following month for military members. Some of the specifics of the program include: ***Military: Military members can contribute up to 8 percent of their base pay. Airmen also have the ability to invest all or part of their bonuses or special pay. But their total yearly tax-deferred investment cannot exceed \$12,000, except those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$40,000 in annual contributions. Military members can enroll through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Web site at <http://www.dfas.mil/emss/>. They can also enroll by filling out a Form TSP-U-1 at local military personnel flights, finance offices and family support centers. Civilian: Contribution limits are based on which retirement system an employee has. Federal Employees' Retirement System employees may contribute up to 13 percent of basic pay each pay period. The government provides matching funds of up to 4 percent as well as an automatic 1 percent each pay period whether the employee contributes or not, making the government's contribution 5 percent.*** Employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System may contribute up to 8 percent of basic pay, but do not receive any matching contributions. The percentage FERS and CSRS employees may contribute will increase by one point each year through 2005, when they will be restricted only by the Internal Revenue Code's annual limit, which is \$12,000 in 2003, Thomas said. ***Specific information is available for civilians on the Thrift Savings Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/> or the BEST homepage at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm> and for airmen at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift_savings_plan.htm.***

All Air Force-serviced civilian employees must choose their TSP contribution amount or changes through the BEST automated phone system at (800) 997-2378, or commercial 527-2378 in San Antonio.

Hearing-impaired employees may contact BEST by calling TDD (800) 382-0893 or commercial 565-2276. Overseas employees can dial a toll-free direct access number for the country they are in. Direct access numbers and instructions are located at http://www.att.com/international_business/dialing_guide/country-diallist.cgi.

Counselors are available weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST. The BEST Employee Benefits Information System web application is located at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS.htm.

People can choose which fund to contribute to by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777 or on the TSP Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/>. Military members with general TSP questions can call the AFPC contact center at DSN 665-5000 or toll-free (866) 229-7074. (Courtesy of AFPC News Service)

Air Force Starts Assessment Survey

by Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez, Air Force Print News

5/1/2003 - **WASHINGTON** -- After a short delay because of Operation Iraqi Freedom, ***the 2003 Air Force Community Assessment survey is under way.*** According to the director of family advocacy research, the agency responsible for conducting the assessment, ***the survey is now being sent out to more than 180,000 randomly chosen active-duty and Reserve airmen and their spouses.*** Maj. James D. Whitworth said Air Force officials will use results from the assessment to learn how to better help airmen and their families. Questions on the assessment are written to help leaders at Air Force

installations gain insight into how people feel about their communities and the services provided within those communities, Whitworth said. Airmen can complete the survey via the World Wide Web. Spouses have the option of completing it on the Web or on paper. The assessment will take less than 20 minutes to complete, Whitworth said. According to Whitworth, the effectiveness of the assessment depends on participants' willingness to accurately complete it. "We want to make improvements in our communities without guessing," Whitworth said. "We need to know people's thoughts and needs. If people don't tell us what they need or what their problems are, we can't help them. This assessment is their chance to do that."

Enlisted Promotion Study Guides Arrive in May

04/21/03 - RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) -- *The 2003 promotion fitness exam and supervisory examination study guides are expected at Air Force locations worldwide in May.*

Air Force Occupational Measurement Squadron officials here said Air Force Pamphlet 36-2241, Volumes 1 and 2, Promotion Fitness Examination and U.S. Air Force Supervisory Examination study guides are being distributed and should be available from unit Weighted Airman Promotion System managers in May. The guides become effective July 1. The new study guides have a CD-ROM with an electronic version of the study guide included with each volume. Members testing for promotion are required to have their promotion study references at least 60 days before testing. Senior master sergeants testing for chief master sergeant will be the first to test using the new study guides. All enlisted members are authorized a copy of the study guides, but airmen eligible for promotion have priority. The 2003 study guides have changed considerably and should be reviewed thoroughly, according to Chief Master Sgt. Debra Bass, of AFOMS' professional development flight.

Support Network Available for Families of Deployed Airmen

by Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker

Air Force Print News

04/14/03 - BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE, D.C. -- For many years, families of active and reserve component airmen, along with Air Force civilian employees, have had to deal with the stresses associated with deployments and remote tours. However, families no longer have to endure these separations alone, according to Tech. Sgt. Rebecca Tester, personnel and family readiness noncommissioned officer. "***There is a support network available at each base's family support center that offers a wide array of resources to help families cope with these difficult and lonely separations,***" Tester said. To take advantage of these resources, families do not have to live on a base or even near an Air Force installation. "There are many families who may have moved closer to relatives during the military member's deployment or live in a town without a base," she said. "We are still here for them and able to help. We even extend that help to relatives who may be taking care of a deployed airman's children." Tester said that they often work with their counterparts at other Air Force bases and sister service installations to help these families. "Here in the National Capital Region we work with the other services to put our families in touch with others in their area who are experiencing the same thing, or help them get information on resources and social gatherings on these other installations," she said. Although Tester and other center staff members may not be able to answer every question, she said they will do everything they can to direct families to those who can. "We're here to help with any problems that may arise, including legal or financial concerns or even how to place a morale call or send a video e-mail to the deployed family member," she said. According to Tester, regardless of the type of deployment or tour, families should not hesitate to call for help. "We've even assisted families whose military member deployed stateside," she said. "Although it may

be easier for families to stay in contact with the (stateside) deployed airmen, they shouldn't hesitate to seek help because they still are coping with the (absence) of an important member of the family." As the number and frequency of deployments increase throughout the Air Force, family support centers have begun taking a proactive approach. "We provide more support to the units today," Tester said. "We work with the unit deployment managers to pass out information to the deploying troops and schedule them for pre-deployment briefings." Deploying airmen are encouraged to bring their families with them to these briefings, but that is not always easy with job or child-care commitments, she said. "But we're still here for them," she said. "All they have to do is pick up the phone and ask for help." Other resources such as the Air Force Crossroads Web site can help families keep in touch through Global Internet Mail. The site provides a spouses' forum to ask questions or discuss concerns. ***GI Mail is a secure means to allow military members from all services and their families to communicate with each other through e-mail.*** Account registration and use of GI Mail is available to users from any computer with Internet access. ***Air Force Crossroads verifies eligibility with the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System. Once validated, the account's user-ID and password can be used to access the system from anywhere in the world.***

Adjusting to the New Steady State -- NCO Retraining Program by CSAF

As we continue to adjust to the demands of fighting the global war on terrorism, defending the homeland, and fulfilling our global security requirements, we must adapt to the new steady state that has stressed so many of the career fields in our Air Force. ***With the force reductions of the 1990s and the skill level imbalances we've experienced in some career fields, the stage was set for a challenging human resources environment.*** Over many months, we've expended considerable effort studying our "stressed career fields." We are now taking action, and are taking a variety of steps to increase manning in undermanned specialties and balance skills across the force. ***This "Sight Picture" will explain one of the tools we are using -- the Noncommissioned Officer Retraining Program (NCORP).*** While certain career fields are experiencing more pain than others, the results of each study yield similar conclusions -- every skill and most of our people are experiencing stress of some kind. ***We must step out aggressively to balance the skills and reduce the stress level across the force within current resources and constraints. We are engaged in a number of complementary efforts, including a fundamental reassessment of the basic structure, assignment, and training policies for our most stressed career fields.*** We are reviewing who should fill, how we fill, how we can best fix undermanned career fields, and how to stabilize our force. ***The NCO Retraining Program will help correct imbalances while still providing NCOs a voice in their own Air Force career. The NCORP consists of both voluntary and involuntary phases. Phase I, the voluntary phase, encourages eligible airmen to retrain into selected shortage career fields. If goals are not met through the voluntary phase, Phase II, or the involuntary phase, is implemented in select shortage specialties. A formal NCORP has not been active since FY99. Reintroducing the annual program is necessary to help balance skills mixes across AFSCs, pull more manpower into stressed career fields, and help reshape the force to meet current and future operational needs. We have established an initial programmed target of 1,400 NCO quotas.*** We have also taken steps to move authorizations (spaces) which will drive movement of people (faces) from less stressed to more stressed career fields. ***We will begin by moving approximately 3,700 spaces, adjusting accession requirements to get them in the door, and reallocating training seats to produce more personnel in stressed skills.*** The retraining program will help us fill in NCO shortages in undermanned skills. The realignment of authorizations will begin immediately and will be evaluated periodically to determine if additional adjustments are needed. We will also aggressively look at corresponding

programs such as bonus programs, assignment policy, and the chronic critical skills list to ensure they complement our objectives. Although the timing of this initiative might appear to conflict with current operations, these changes are vital to ensure we are postured correctly to meet our long-term mission demands. As with any initiative of this magnitude, many of you will be concerned with how this will affect your career. We need to address these concerns at the outset to ensure we take care of our people through this process. Supervisors and leaders at all levels must take time to learn how this program will work and then clearly communicate the specifics to their people. AFPC will provide detailed implementation instructions through local MPFs via message within the next few days. Despite the challenges associated with this effort, it is clear we must reshape our force now if we hope to retain our status as the best-trained, equipped, and motivated air and space force in the world. Our expeditionary force continues to provide world-class capabilities to joint operations around the world. With this initiative, we reinforce this capability, and begin the process of balancing our force without breaking career fields, individual careers, or our mission capabilities. We hold to our principle that developing airmen is the first and foremost of our core competencies, and taking care of our people is the most important thing we do. While we take these actions to meet the mission needs of our Air Force, we do them with the best interests of our airmen in mind.

MARINES:

Upcoming Selection Boards:

- **Major General, 7 Oct**
- **Brigadier General, 6 Oct**
- **Reserve Major General, 16 Oct**
- **Reserve Brigadier General, 3 Nov**
- **Reserve Colonel, 21 Oct**

- **Lieutenant Colonel, 4 Sep**
- **Lieutenant Colonel LDO, 27 Oct**
- **Reserve Lieutenant Colonel, 21 Oct**
- **Reserve Major, 21 Oct**

Tan Belt Qualification Deadline Draws Near

Marines required to 'belt' skills, submitted by: MCB Camp Butler

Story by Cpl. Trevor M. Carlee

For years, Marines have earned the title of America's number one fighting force. Marines ensure success on the battlefield by rigorous physical training, combat training exercises and annual marksmanship training. ***The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, which began in October 2000 under former commandant, Gen. James L. Jones, is now another tool to prepare Marines and ensure combat readiness. By Sept. 30, all Marines will be required to be at least tan belt qualified in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.*** MCMAP instructors are urging everyone not qualified to sign up for a tan belt class as soon as they can, in order to meet the deadline. The class is approximately 27 hours long and usually takes about two weeks to complete. Currently, Marines come from recruit training tan belt qualification, so this year's deadline does not affect new Marines, said Gunnery Sgt. Darrell S. Pinson, Marine Corps Martial Arts Instructor trainer, Marine Corps Martial Arts School Far East Coast, III Marine Expeditionary Force. However, ***by the deadline next year, all infantrymen will be required to be brown-belt qualified according to rank since lance corporals***

cannot rate a brown belt. Also, all combat-arms Marines will be required to be green belt qualified and all other non-combat arms Marines will be required to be gray belt qualified. These deadlines apply to all Marines, regardless of when they came into the Marine Corps. Pinson said these deadlines are the only ones that have been set so far, but he added there might be new ones in the future. He added that the deadline has been put into effect so Marines are continuously trained in the martial arts program. "The (Commandant of the Marine Corps) wants Marines to possess a quality that other services don't have," the Columbia, S.C., native, said. After the deadline arrives, Pinson said ***the belt that the individual rates will factor into the Marine composite scores, for corporals and below, and fitness reports, for sergeants and above.*** "It holds the individual Marine to a higher standard," Pinson said. "MCMAP should be like everything else (such as the rifle range, swimming qualifications and the gas chamber). No one is left out - it goes from private all the way to the commandant." Pinson added that the commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Michael W. Hagee, has continued his support of the martial arts program. "(MCMAP) helps build confidence in Marines as far as close combat is concerned," said Lance Cpl. Abraham Thompson, data switch repair technician, Electronics Maintenance Company, Materiel Readiness Battalion, 3rd Force Service Support Group, and Chicago native. The program also offers instructor training, so Marines can train others in their unit up to their current belt. However, instructors can only test to the belt below them, according to Pinson. With instructors working within the units, Pinson believes it will help the qualification process. "MCMAP gives something that (Marines) can call their own," Pinson said. "We're not trying to piggy back on someone else. It's the Marine Corps' martial arts."

New Marine Corps Family Support Order

On 18 March 2003, the new version of the Marine Corps Family Support Order was signed and effective. The ***order substantially revises Marine Corps family support guidelines.*** The ***duty of Marines to support their family members continues to be an obligation the Marine Corps takes very seriously.*** In order to bring Marine Corps family support policy in line with the majority of state family support laws, the new version of the Marine Corps order, Chapter 15 of MCO P5800.16A with Change 3, is a substantial revision that should be read in its entirety by all Marines. The order alters rights and obligations of *both* Marines and supported family members. The order should be read for a complete understanding of the changes. Five changes are of particular note.

- The ***duty to provide interim support now begins only once a complaint of nonsupport is received by the Marine's command at a Special Court-Martial Convening Authority level*** (usually Battalion Commander) or higher. Thus, there can never be arrears of interim support under the order until the first nonsupport complaint is received.
- "Gross Military Pay" now includes *all* military pay and allowances, before taxes and other deductions.
- The minimum per-person interim support amount is now graduated, decreasing as the number of family members rises.
- The pool of persons among whom BAH is equally divided now includes the Marine providing support. In other words, an equal fraction of BAH is now reserved for the Marine's own use.

- Only four bases exist for reduction or waiver of the interim support amount: (1) the spouse's gross income exceeds the Gross Military Pay of the Marine; (2) support has been paid per the order for a consecutive twelve-month period; (3) where the Marine is a victim of substantiated spousal abuse; and, (4) where the

Marine provides adequate financial support via alternate means such that reduction is justified. The adultery waiver has been eliminated.. For a copy of the revision, visit <http://www.usmc.mil/directiv.nsf/gam?OpenView &Count=3000> or the CMC (Code JAL) homepage, at <http://sja.hqmc.usmc.mil/jal/JAL.htm>. At the CMC (Code JAL) page one will also find a downloadable Automatic Support Calculator, which will provide the order's support amount upon the user's entry of pay information obtainable from a recent LES. Please contact your local Legal Assistance Office with any questions regarding this order and for further explanation of your rights and benefits. CMC (Code JAL) may be reached at HQMCLegal@HQMC.USMC.MIL or 703/614-1266.

15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Named.

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael W. Hagee announced the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps *will be Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada*. Sgt. Maj. Estrada is currently serving as sergeant major for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, based at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., and is forward-deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Child Support Modification Prior to Deployment

One of the most common legal problems deployed reservists encounter upon returning from deployment is unmanageable child support arrears. Reservists sometimes face cuts in pay upon leaving their civilian employment. *Unless a Marine is proactive in asking state courts to reduce his or her child support obligation, child support obligations remain unchanged throughout deployment.* If there is a substantial change in circumstances regarding the payor parent's ability to make child support payments, or regarding the needs of the children, then *the payor parent should consider petitioning for a modification in child support prior to deployment. Failure to do so could result in large child support arrears, and in some jurisdictions criminal penalties, upon return from deployment.* State child support prosecutors advise, and we agree, that this problem sometimes may be solved by immediately proceeding to your local county-level courthouse's "family division" and asking for assistance in modifying either court- or agency-ordered child support. In some states, this service will be offered free of charge to the parent paying child support, and court or agency representatives will assist in drawing up the necessary paperwork. Legal advice from civilian counsel or the nearest Legal Assistance office, and advice from court or agency representatives, will help you decide whether a modification request is appropriate and in what jurisdiction to file. For a list of Marine Corps Legal Assistance offices, visit <http://sja.hqmc.usmc.mil/jal/Locations/Locations.htm>. A clickable map of state court systems is available at <http://law.freeadvice.com/resources/statecourts.htm>, and an extensive list of various levels of state courts is provided by Villanova University School of Law at <http://vls.law.vill.edu/Locator/statecourt/>. This modification process may take a minimum of weeks or even months. If you believe you need to modify child support, seek legal advice immediately and consider visiting the local court system. Please contact your chain of command for referral to local reserve Judge Advocates who will provide free legal support. You may also contact your local bar

association for an attorney referral list to local civilian attorneys. Finally, feel free to contact CMC (Code JAL) with any questions at HQMCLegal@HQMC.USMC.MIL or 703/614-1266.

NAVY:

- **Navy Stop Loss Actions:** Current operations in Iraq and the ongoing War On Terrorism may require that personnel with certain critical skills be retained in the Navy to maintain combat readiness. Accordingly, the Secretary of the Navy has suspended those provisions of law and policy relating to retirement and separation for certain members of the Navy who are essential to the unique nature of Navy and Marine Corps current operations. The following list of skills has been authorized for Navy Stop Loss Actions:
 - Security limited duty officers (649x).
 - Security technician warrant officers (749x).
 - Personnel in the master-at-arms (ma) rating.
 - Navy law enforcement specialists (NEC 9545).
 - Enlisted afloat planning system (APS) maintenance technician (NEC 1676) personnel.
 - Enlisted mission distribution system operator (NEC 2778) personnel.
 - Cryptologic technician (interpretive) personnel with the following NECS: 9202, 9209, or 9216.
 - Cryptologic technician (communication), cryptologic technician (collection), and cryptologic technician (technical) personnel with the following NECS: 8295 or 8296.
 - Hospital corpsman personnel with the following NECS: 8403, 8425, 8427 or 8541.
 - E1-E6 Field Medical Service Technician (HM NEC 8404).

Navy Task Force Studying Possible Changes In Uniforms

By Greg Tyler, Stars and Stripes

When it comes to Navy uniforms, things can get a little complicated, and even expensive. The Navy's top officer wants to change that. Adm. Vern Clark, chief of Naval Operations, decided to dig through sailors' sea bags to see what stays — and what needs to go. ***He's deemed the mission Task Force Uniform.*** "Task Force Uniform was initiated by the sailors, who've had a lot of questions about different uniform policies," said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry Scott during a recent visit to Sasebo Naval Base. "It got to the point where the CNO said 'We need to take a look and start from scratch,' looking at the entire uniform sea bag, as well as all the uniform regulations." Clark put Scott, the Navy's top enlisted sailor, at the helm of the initiative to study and react to sailors' concerns about uniforms. ***The task force first met in mid-March in Washington, according to a Navy press release. The group discussed options for a more professional, sensible, cost-effective set of uniforms.*** "Sailors need uniforms that provide versatility, durability and even interchangeability," Scott said. "We need to make sure we address those concerns." The ***committee includes members from various Navy elements — surface forces, air forces, submariners, Seabees and others.*** Both enlisted sailors and officers are among task force members to "cast as wide a net as possible," Scott said. They're to report to Clark in October. Among issues emerging from the task force's first meeting:

*Developing a working uniform for sea or ashore, across all communities.

*Establishing a year-round service uniform for pay grades E-1 through E-6.

*Making the Navy's uniform regulations easier to understand.

*Designing or redesigning uniforms to take into account various body shapes and sizes.

"We want to keep what makes sense and get rid of that that doesn't," Scott said.

"We don't want a complete make-over of uniform regulations; we want them to make sense," he said.

Scott said the task force also hopes to cut back on the sheer number of uniform elements and variations sailors now are required to maintain. Although several practical changes are likely, he said, sailors won't see drastic changes anytime soon. "***But with the CNO expecting a report in October, we're going to be moving pretty quickly,***" he said. Still, Scott said, more than 200 years of Navy history won't be tossed aside: "We're going to have a strong sense of tradition. We want to make sure our sailors still feel like sailors."

COAST GUARD:

Coast Guard Bonus. *The Coast Guard has announced that Release from Active Duty (RELAD) personnel who are obligated to serve the remainder of their initial eight-year military service obligations in the ready reserve are eligible to receive a bonus for affiliation with the Selected Reserve (SELRES), equal to 50 dollars per month of remaining service obligation. Affiliation bonuses are authorized for all ratings regardless of type of unit assigned. Affiliation bonuses may be paid to members who served on active duty in the Coast Guard or in another service, who have a remaining ready reserve obligation, and have no prior obligation to drill with the SELRES.*

RESERVISTS/GUARD:

ALL PERSONNEL

Rumsfeld Submits Report Calling For Sweeping Changes In Military

By Michael Kilian, Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON — ***Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Monday submitted to Congress a sweeping proposal for reforming the American military that would rewrite Pentagon retirement and retention rules and abolish practices that have governed the military for generations.*** The 204-page document also would increase the secretary's authority to eliminate reports to Congress and waive rules that interfere with military readiness. The package of reforms, titled the "Defense Transformation for the 21st Century Act," would increase senior officers' retirement age, push some military jobs into the private sector and exempt the Defense Department from environmental laws the secretary considered an impediment to readiness. Rumsfeld appeared to be taking advantage of the success of the Iraq war to push reforms that have been fiercely resisted by Pentagon brass and their allies in Congress since the beginning of the Bush administration. Rumsfeld has argued for restructuring the U.S. defense establishment to make it lighter and more flexible. He contends the military still is configured for fighting a major conflict in Europe with the defunct Soviet Union, rather than for the more rapid and long-range kind of warfare the U.S. has been waging in Iraq. As he said last month at a Defense Department town meeting, ***"The attacks of Sept. 11 make transforming the department even more urgent," because the military is not designed "to fight the shadowy terrorists and terrorist networks that operate with the support and assistance of terrorist states."*** Rumsfeld submitted his plan at a

time when the Pentagon high command is busy with the Iraq war, the nation is preoccupied with that conflict and Congress has gone out of town for a two-week spring recess. Spokesmen for the Senate and the House Armed Services Committees said there would be no official response to the document until it had been studied carefully. Rumsfeld asked that the legislative package be adopted as part of this year's defense authorization bill. ***One controversial provision of the proposal would remove the four-year time limit for generals and admirals serving in top leadership positions, including chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, chief of naval operations, Army chief of staff, Marine Corps commandant and Air Force chief of staff. It would also allow less senior officers to remain in command positions for longer periods of time.*** "I think that the United States armed forces make a terrible mistake by having so many permanent changes of station, by having so many people skip along at the tops of the waves in a job and serve in it 12, 15, 18, 24 months and be gone," Rumsfeld said in a speech to the Reserve Officers Association in January. "When somebody does that, they spend the first six months saying hello to everybody, the next six months trying to learn the job and the last six months leaving." ***There has been deep-seated opposition to that change because of fears in the officer ranks that it would mean a slower rate of promotion and stagnation in lesser positions. As compensation, the proposal would allow some high-ranking officers to retire early without loss of benefits. It also would eliminate limits on the number of generals and admirals the services could have at various pay grades.*** Another provision would reorganize the reserves and National Guard into separate job classifications for assignments that could require long deployments on active duty and those that would only require reservists to attend weekend meetings and two weeks' training in the summer. "The reality is people in the (National) Guard do in fact have jobs and are not signed up to be full time," Rumsfeld said. "They're signed up to be part time. They're signed up to be helpful when needed." More than 200,000 reserve and National Guard troops have been called up from civilian life to active duty for the Iraq war, and some have been facing deployments exceeding a year. ***Rumsfeld's plan would allow reserve and National Guard generals and admirals to serve until age 68 and allow some designated by the defense secretary to serve until 72.*** It also would permit generals and admirals and senior enlisted ranks to receive retirement pay greater than 75 percent of their base pay, the current limit. ***According to David Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, the U.S. armed forces are 31,400 over authorized strength because a "stop loss" hold was put on members preparing to retire or otherwise leave the service during the Iraq emergency.*** Rumsfeld is proposing to keep uniformed strength at about 1.5 million but turn over as many as 300,000 jobs now performed by military personnel to outside civilian contractors. Rumsfeld's plan would also:

- * Authorize the secretary of defense to spend \$200 million to "assist foreign nations whose support is critical to counterterrorism efforts";
- * Empower the secretary to waive laws that require the use of American-made products if they interfere with national security;
- * Enable the Pentagon to award contracts on the basis of quality as well as low cost;
- * Remove limits on the size of the staff in the defense secretary's office;
- * Streamline the defense secretary's ability to spend money on the missile defense program;
- * Eliminate the requirement for the Defense Department to make periodic reports to Congress on a host of issues (the list covers about 100 pages), including the state of the B-1 bomber, which Rumsfeld contends has proved itself in combat.

Joint Meritorious Unit Award (JMUA)

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has awarded the JMUA to *Headquarters*, US Southern Command, for exceptionally meritorious achievement from 1 Dec 2001 to 31 Dec 2002. Only those members of the Armed Forces of the US who were present at the time and directly participated in the achievement/service for 30 days or more, are authorized to wear the JMUA ribbon.

New ID Cards are Secure, Ready (Although written for AF personnel, below article is of interest to all)

04/22/03 - RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) -- *The high-tech identification common access card currently replacing the familiar green ID card worldwide is secure and proven in combat, despite some rumors to the contrary.* "Worries are unfounded" that the new ID cards are easily accessible to identity thieves or even hostile forces, said Chief Master Sgt. Ricky Arnold, survival, evasion, resistance and escape program manager at the Pentagon. *"These cards are not a risk to anyone's privacy or security,"* said the chief. "We thoroughly researched the security risks before we even began to issue common access cards," said Maj. Gen. Richard Mentemeyer, director of operations and training at the Air Staff. *"We were satisfied then, and recent events have reinforced our belief that common access cards are not only secure and safe but also provide required Geneva Conventions information in the event an airman is captured,"* the general said. "In a war zone or at home station, there should be no hesitation: Don't leave home without it," he said. *The card does not contain any personal information electronically that is not already printed on the card,* officials said. What it does is allow for electronic access to computer systems that contain personal data. Also, an extra layer of protection is provided when a card is reported lost or the cardholder goes into missing or captured status. At that point, computer and data system access is turned off, officials said. And built-in electronic security measures make getting access to the information on the chip extremely difficult, if not impossible, officials said. *"To date, there has not been a single successful attempt to extract information from one of these cards,"* Arnold said. Arnold said airmen isolated in hostile areas do not have to worry because officials tested and validated the process for turning off computer access during Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Common access cards should be issued across the Department of Defense by October to all eligible Air Force active-duty people, guardsmen, reservists, civilians and some contractors, officials said.* Rumors that some deployed airmen destroyed or lost their common access cards in an effort to get an old-fashioned green ID card reissued to them spurred officials to conduct an informal study into the matter, Arnold said. "The results showed no evidence of that sort of activity which would be illegal, since the cards are government property," the chief said. More information can be found at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/smartcard>. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)

PAY AND ENTITLEMENTS

SGLI premiums going down in July

*by Army Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service*

04/10/03 - WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- *The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that premiums for the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance will be reduced, handing military members a few extra dollars in their pockets each month.*

Beginning in July, the cost for a \$250,000 policy -- the maximum coverage -- will drop from \$20 to \$16.25 monthly, a \$3.75 savings. The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that rates for Veterans Group Life Insurance will not change. Tom Tower, the Department of Defense's assistant director for military compensation, welcomed the reduced premiums, adding that anytime you put "more money in the pockets of military members, it's always a good result." *Premiums will also be reduced for SGLI family coverage, with rates varying among age groups. The largest saving will go to spouses 35 to 39 years old, whose premiums will be nearly cut in half. Servicemembers currently pay \$13 for a \$100,000 family policy.* That policy will cost \$7.50 beginning in July -- a \$5.50 savings. The reduced rates mean a military family will save an average of \$100 a year. VA officials estimate that servicemembers collectively will save about \$96 million annually in premiums, and \$42 million in family coverage premiums each year. Tower said the reduced premiums are a result of an ongoing process to keep costs down for military members. "The VA regularly checks to see how much is paid out versus how much is collected in premiums, and whenever it seems like they have built up premium reserves, they like to reduce premiums to keep the cost to a minimum for the member," Tower said. "Its part of the objective of the program: to provide the lowest cost possible." SGLI began in 1965 to meet the insurance needs of Vietnam-era servicemembers. Before SGLI, the military provided \$10,000 policies to servicemembers, and policies were available to active-duty military only. Today the SGLI program provides coverage of \$250,000 to active-duty servicemembers and most Reservists. Coverage of \$100,000 has also been provided for spouses of participating members with free coverage of \$10,000 for dependent children. Reduced levels of coverage may also be elected.

Information about the change in SGLI premiums can be found at www.insurance.va.gov, or call the office of Servicemembers Group Life Insurance toll free at (800) 419-1473.

MISCELLANEOUS AND FAMILY ISSUES

Army to Tighten Travel-Card Policy

by Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 2, 2003) - *Using the government travel card when changing duty stations will no longer be permitted, and Army officials said non-authorized use of the card will be met with harsher penalties.* Congress directed the Department of Defense to develop a comprehensive disciplinary policy for military personnel and civilians who misuse the Bank of America travel card. The policy is scheduled to be released soon, said Francis A. Rago, the U.S. Army Travel Card Program manager. In addition to discontinuing use of the travel card during permanent change-of-station moves, *a memorandum from the Office of the Secretary of the Army states that cards are to be deactivated prior to departure from duty stations, unless there is temporary duty en route.* Other changes to the travel card program, effective immediately, are: *commands and activities should not use the card to pay for conference registration fees; charge cards of mobilized reservists will be transferred to active-duty agencies and deactivated until use is required; cardholders are not required to use their card for travel expenses associated with mission deployments.*

At the installation level, one of the first changes program coordinators made was to put the accounts of infrequent travelers in a closed or inactive status.

"We started cutting our list of cardholders two years ago by deactivating accounts, and we have a success story now," said Cynthia Jackson, from the Garrison Resource Management Service Center at Fort McPherson, Ga. "The Army's goal is for installations to keep dollars delinquent below 4.5 percent and account delinquencies below 3 percent, ours is at 1 percent," Jackson said. "Creating a smaller list of cardholders allows us to keep tabs on our users. We know who is traveling, and what they are doing while in travel status." Fort McPherson is following the example set by DoD and the Army, by limiting their number of cardholders. The Army has cancelled more than 156,000 travel-card accounts since October, and currently has 280,000 open accounts. The number of accounts will fluctuate, and once current legislation is implemented, cards will not be issued to those who are not credit-worthy, Pentagon officials said. Commanders and program coordinators have always had the responsibility of maintaining accountability of their cardholders, but according to the January memorandum from Army Secretary Thomas White's office, travel-card coordinators now must review at least 10 percent of active accounts monthly. Investigating accounts is how Jackson said her organization keeps cardholders out of danger of nonpayment. "If we notice that an account is 30 days late, we contact the commander or unit point of contact before the account goes past 60 days," Jackson said. The travel card program is simple, Rago said. Cardholders use the card only for official travel expenses, a claim for reimbursement is done immediately upon return, and split disbursement is used to pay their travel card bill. When current legislation mandating split disbursement is implemented part of the reimbursement would be sent directly to Bank of America and the balance to the traveler's bank account. In any case, not paying the bill could affect the user's credit and security clearance, Pentagon officials said. At Congress' direction, there will be a government-wide quarterly report on the travel card program, to include a statistical summary of disciplinary action taken, officials added. Misuse will also go through security channels to determine whether there should be an impact on the cardholder's security clearance, Pentagon officials said. Three years ago DoD mandated that federal employees use the travel card for all official travel expenses such as lodging, transportation, rental cars and other allowable charges. That changed after July 2002, when a U.S. General Accounting Office audit found numerous incidents of cardholder abuse, lack of accountability and inadequate command emphasis. "The GAO report correctly pointed out many problems with the Army's implementation of the travel-card program, and the Army is increasing scrutiny and taking corrective actions to resolve misuse and delinquency in the Army Travel Card Program," Pentagon officials said. Since March, there were 6,869 delinquent travel card accounts, equating to \$4.1 million in delinquency. Those numbers show progress in reducing the Army's outstanding debt to Bank of America, officials said. Accounts that have past due balances made up 16.25 percent of Army accounts last year, but delinquent accounts now only total 5.24 percent.

Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act of 2003:

A bill was sent to the House of Representatives (HR 1307) and the Senate to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. HR 1307 provides tax breaks to active-duty and reserve military personnel. This bill also includes several provisions that would reduce taxes and inconveniences incurred by people fulfilling military commitments. This bill includes giving military more flexibility to claim tax exclusion for capital gains from home sales. Taxpayers are allowed to exempt capital gains from home sales of up to \$250,000 for an individual and \$500,000 for couples. To qualify, the homeowner must have owned the home for at least five years and resided in it for 24 months. HR 1307 also eases the residency requirement to compensate for periods when the homeowner is assigned to serve more than

150 miles from home. This bill would make the change retroactive to 6 May 1997. Other tax breaks this bill will provide to military:

- Exempts from the gross incomes of military personnel and civilian employees amounts received from the Defense Department's Homeowners Assistance Program
- Allow National Guard and Reserve members to take an above-the-line deduction for their transportation, meals and lodging expenses while on an overnight stay related to their service.
- It extends tax filing and tax-paying deadlines for military personnel deployed outside of the US away from their permanent duty stations while participating in an effort designated a "contingency operation."
- Will permits descendants of past and present members of the armed forces to qualify as members in a veteran's organization without the organization losing its tax- exempt status.

Status: Both the House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously passed their respective versions of the bill on 20 Mar 03 and 27 Mar 03, respectively. The bill must first go to conference (date TBD) before it is sent to the White House for POTUS signature. SCJ1 and Congressional Affairs will provide more information when available.

Hotline and Family Support Information Numbers

ARMY

1-800-833-6622

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Army Family Assistance Hotline is to provide families and loved ones caring support in the form of accurate information, useful resources, and helpful referrals related to family issues. The Family Assistance Hotline is a "safety net" for those who have exhausted all other information resources.

AIR FORCE

Air Force # 1-800-435-9941

PURPOSE: This line is an information and referral resource for both active and reserve Air Force service members and families.

NAVY

1-800-FSCLINE or 1-800-372-5463

MARINE CORPS

For Marines stationed East of the Mississippi River (minus Wisconsin) 1-800-336-4663

For Marines stationed West of the Mississippi Rive (plus Wisconsin) 1-800-253-1624

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

1-888-777-7731 (Headquarters NGB)

There is also an 800# for each NG state coordinator—may be accessed through this number

Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)

1-800-222-0364:

PURPOSE: DLA Life Connections is an Employee Assistance Program that offers information and referral assistance with the following issues:

- **Family**-Adoption, Prenatal Care, Child Care, Adult Care, Parenting, Relationships, Domestic Violence, Aging Loved Ones
- **Health & Wellness**-Diet/Nutrition, Fitness Programs, Children's, Men's and Women's Health
- **Education**-Preschools, Schools, Special Education, Colleges, Financial Aid..
- **Financial/Legal** - Credit/Debt, Insurance, Retirement/Estate Planning, Taxes, Wills.
- **Daily Life**-Automotive Services, Home Improvement, Moving, Pets, Special Events, Travel
If calling from OCONUS- dial 1-314-264-7702 and ask operator to reverse charges in addition to using the website.

US COAST GUARD

1-800-872-4957, EXT 932 (this is the Coast Guard EAP for HQ - Work-life program)

DEPLOYMENT HEALTH SUPPORT HOTLINE:

1-800-497-6261

PURPOSE: Contact manager provides accurate and up-to-date deployment health information about present and past military deployments to service members, veterans, family members and the general public. As needed, the Deployment Health Support Directorate provides case management and referral services. Hours of operation: 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. EST. Associated Web sites include DeploymentLINK and GulfLINK.

MEDIA ADVISORY: RED CROSS STATEMENT ON MILITARY FAMILIES HOAX

National Headquarters
430 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
www.redcross.org

Contact: Devorah Goldberg
Phone: (202) 639-3326
Cell: 571-236-3858
goldburgd@usa.redcross.org

Contact: Darren Irby

Phone: (202) 639-3501

Cell: 202-498-9898

irbyd@usa.redcross.org

Washington, D.C., Thursday, April 3, 2003— The American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services has received word from the National Guard Bureau about a disturbing hoax. There have been several recent incidents where family members of deployed service members received a phone call from individuals claiming to be "a representative from the Red Cross." Callers informed these families that their deployed service member was MIA (Missing in Action). So far, we are aware of incidents that occurred in the Delaware, Alabama and Michigan areas. In one case, a son's mother was told her son had been killed in action and in other cases families have also been alerted that their service member was either missing in action or a prisoner of war. When such events actually occur, the U.S. military - not the American Red Cross - is the organization that notifies families regarding the status of their military loved ones; this notification is almost always accomplished in person by military casualty officials. The American Red Cross is requesting that families or individuals who receive these hoax calls to immediately contact their local military liaison. In addition, individuals should call a special Red Cross toll free number to report the incident - that number is **888-309-9679**. The Red Cross will relay this information to appropriate authorities.

Background about the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Service

The American Red Cross supports members of the military and their families in four primary areas:

- Providing emergency communications services and linking military personnel to their families back home. Emergency communication services are provided round-the-clock, 7-days-a-week, 365 days-a-year, reaching military installations, embassies and ships at sea around the world.
- Mobilization and deployment of Red Cross workers into (or near) the area of conflict. To deliver emergency messages from families at home. They also offer respite from harsh and challenging conditions and bring a touch of home to the troops. As of March 19, there are approximately 31 Red Cross workers serving in the Persian Gulf Region.
- Red Cross chapters nationwide are providing outreach to members of the National Guard/Reserves and their families.
- Social services - access to financial assistance, verification of information required for emergency leave, counseling, family support and services for veterans.

Supporting the Red Cross

The American Red Cross is not a government agency. We rely on the assistance of caring supporters to deliver our critical services. Those interested can support U.S. military members and their families through the American Red Cross as we provide assistance and comfort. Please make a financial donation to Armed Forces Emergency Services by calling 1-800-HELP NOW or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish). Contributions may be sent to the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services, P. O. Box 91820, Washington, DC 20090. Internet users can make a secure online contribution by visiting www.redcross.org. Your gift will support the nationally coordinated Red Cross services

provided to military families across the country and to American service men and women located throughout the world.

Some Scholarship and Education Websites Of Possible Interest

Scholarship Web Sites [[top](#)] [http://www.armyeducation.army.mil/Related_Links.html]

U.S. Military Academy at West Point
<http://www.usma.edu/>

U.S. Army Scholarship Programs
<http://www.armyeducation.army.mil/scholarship.html>

Department of Education-Funding
<http://www.ed.gov/funding.html>

Department of Education-Student Financial Assistance
<http://www.ed.gov/studentaid>

Defense Commissary Agency/Fisher House Foundation Scholarships for Military Children
<http://www.commissaries.com/documents/whatsnew/scholarships.htm>

DANTES
<http://voled.doded.mil/resource/scholarships/index.htm>
(The site includes GIBILLEXPRESS, which is aimed specifically at military family members.)

Scholarship Search by The College Board
<http://www.collegeboard.com/>

FreeScholarshipSearch
<http://www.freschinfo.com/browse.htm>

Military.com Scholarship Search
<http://www.military.com/Careers/Education/ScholarshipSearch/>

Scholarship.com
<http://www.scholarships.com>

FastWEB
<http://www.fastweb.com>

CollegeNet Mach25 Scholarship Database
<http://www.collegenet.com/mach25>

Sallie Mae's Online Scholarship Service
<http://www.salliemae.com/planning/scholarships.html>

College Is Possible

<http://www.collegeispossible.org>

FinAid

<http://www.finaid.org>

Specific word searches

<http://www.google.com>

Distance Education / Virtual Schools [[top](#)]

Is Online Learning For Me?

<http://www.onlinelearning.net/ole/holwselfassess.html>

This online quiz from the UCLA Extension will help you assess if you have the makings to be a successful distant-learner.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Online Learning

Illinois Online Network

<http://illinois.online.uillinois.edu/IONresources/onlineoverview/proandcon.html>

Again, although this site has a college focus it is applicable to all potential distant-learners.

This is a good primer for the good, the bad and the ugly of learning online at any level.

The Distance Learning Resource Network

<http://www.dlrn.org>

The Distance Learning Resource Network is the dissemination project for the U.S. Dept. of Education's Star Schools Program, and is an excellent source about distance learning in the K-12 environment. This site includes articles, current research, news, forums, etc., and has something for everyone. Check out the Distance Learning for K-12 Students at

<http://www.dlrn.org/k12/index.html> ...

Distance-Educator.com

<http://www.distance-educator.com/>

Distance-Educator.com is a portal for students, teachers, researchers, and policy-makers in the field of online learning. This site is an good resource for news and current issues surrounding the field.

eSylvan

<http://www.esylvan.com>

eSylvan provides personalized instruction in reading and math to students in 3rd-9th grade.

The National School Boards Association publishes a useful e-magazine: ***Electronic School***.

Go to: <http://www.electronic-school.com/> for this K-12 publication that address issues related to technology in schools as well as virtual learning environments.

Virtual Schoolhouse

<http://www.ibiblio.org/cisco/schools/secondary.html>

The Virtual Schoolhouse has a list some K-12 and international schools that offer distance

learning, online courses, or e-based alternatives. It is fairly comprehensive. What we like about this site is that it offers suggestions and assistance for "getting your school on line."

The Department of Defense Education Activity - **DoDEA E-School**

<http://www.dlc.odedodea.edu/dlweb1.nsf>.

The mission of this very carefully constructed and "ANTI-DULL!" option is: "to provide a world class educational experience to children of military and civilian members at our overseas and stateside schools...(through) a range of course offerings and activities available to these students through the use of distance learning technologies. Note: at this time military-connected students who are not enrolled in the DoDEA or DDESS schools may not participate in the E-School.

More Exciting Military-Friendly Virtual Options:

Did you know that MIT...yes "the MIT!" offers a virtual audit for enrichment-for **free!** Find out more about these "no credit" options by going to the Fact Sheet published by

Massachusetts Institute of Technology--MIT's OpenCourseWare system:

<http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/nr/2001/ocw-facts.html>

MCEC member--**Texas Tech University's Extended Studies** has a long history of offering a rich array of accredited kindergarten through high school curriculum, credit-by-exam through college degree programs. Administrator Gib Weaver ensures makes that military connected students and their family members have the "in-state" rate for tuition. Call: 1-800-MYCOURS or see Tech on the web at:<http://www.dce.ttu.edu/>

Francis Virtual School is an accredited New York virtual high school. Good news--- They give military-connected students the "in state rate"...a big savings!

Francis Virtual School (a member of MCEC) is at: <http://www.francisvirtualschool.org/>

Administrator Peter Bencivenga, has done a super job of making the registration for military families very easy. Click on "registration" and see the military link. The student code for registration will be: **5161** with required documentation.

<http://www.francisvirtualschool.org/reg/military.html>

Homeschooling [[top](#)]

MCEC has taken no position on where parents, consistent with our laws, should educate their children.

We are committed to providing military-connected parents with useful information and resources.

Thus the following links and information are provided:

<http://www.militaryhomeschool.com>

Home Education Magazine

<http://www.home-ed-magazine.com>

National Home Education Network

Military Homeschooling Families

<http://www.nhen.org/nhen/pov/military/>

The Heritage Foundation

School Choice: What's Happening in the States

<http://www.heritage.org/schools/categories.html>

Military Front for Families
Homeschooling
<http://gammin.ourfamily.com/3/hs.html>

National Homeschooling Association
<http://www.n-h-a.org/>

Air Force Magazine
Homeschooling, Air Force Style
<http://www.afa.org/magazine/august2000/0800school.html>

The Washington Post
Mustering for School at Home
On Military Bases, Parents Increasingly Teach Their Own Children
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=metro&contentId=A19473-2000Apr5>

Education Week
Homeschooling
<http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/issuespage.cfm?id=37>

DOD Expands Vaccination Eligibility List

by Master Sgt. Scott Elliott Air Force Print News 4/29/2003 - WASHINGTON -- Adult family members of some servicemembers have joined the list of those eligible to receive smallpox and anthrax vaccinations. According to Department of Defense officials, the voluntary vaccinations are available to adult military family members, all DOD appropriated and nonappropriated fund employees and their adult family members. The policy also applies to all DOD contractor employees assigned to or living in designated higher-threat areas, including State Department missions. Contractor employees must receive authorization from their employers before vaccination, and contractor-employee family members are not eligible, the officials said. Existing policies remain in effect for mandatory vaccination of military members, emergency essential civil service employees and mission essential contractors assigned to higher-threat areas, said Lt. Col. Gwendolyn Hall, chief of the counter proliferation policy branch in the national security policy division at the Pentagon. “The (voluntary) vaccines will be administered in accordance with current policy,” Hall said. ***“The only difference is volunteers will have to sign a vaccine acknowledgement form prior to receiving the vaccine.” All who receive the vaccines undergo a thorough education and pre-screening program.*** During the screening, health-care professionals are available to answer questions about the vaccine and any possible adverse reactions, including recent media reports of a possible correlation between the smallpox vaccine and heart trouble. According to Maj. (Dr.) Mylene Huynh, service officials have updated the policy regarding vaccine exemptions. Huynh is deputy of the operational prevention division for the Air Force Medical Operations Agency at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C. “It’s not known whether smallpox vaccination is a causal or a coincidental association with heart attack,” she said. Still, Huynh said, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a precautionary recommendation, adopted by the DOD and Air Force, that people with certain risk factors not receive the vaccination. “People with conditions such as prior heart attack, angina, congestive heart failure, cardiomyopathy,

stroke or other cardiac conditions currently being evaluated by a physician are exempt from smallpox vaccination," she said. In addition, people with three or more cardiac risk factors are exempt from vaccination, she said. Those conditions include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, a family history of heart disease and current cigarette smokers.

Grants, Internships Grouped on New Web Site

by Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 28, 2003) - ***Information on more than \$570 million in internships, scholarships and grants can be found at a federal government Web site, thanks to an Army major.*** Maj. Barry Williams, currently serving as a White House Fellow, created the "e-scholar" site to give people a wealth of information without having to spin their wheels with numerous search engines. Williams, a former brigade operations officer in South Korea, began his stint as a White House Fellow in September. He was selected after competing against hundreds of other applicants and undergoing numerous of interviews. To date e-scholar has been his greatest contribution to the program, he said.

"This Web site is for America - students, parents, career professionals and those with disabilities," Williams said. "From age 16 on up, from all walks of life, we want to give people a taste of what the federal government has to offer." ***E-scholar, which can be found at <http://www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.htm>, went online March 28 and gets about 12,000 hits a day. Individuals can search for grants, internships, jobs and volunteer service by indicating what type of positions they're looking for, salary expectations and geographic preferences.*** Other tools located at the site include "Create a Profile" and "Create a Resume." By entering a profile, individuals can be notified if what they are looking for is posted at a future date. Also, individuals can send their resumes out electronically. This Web site is going to build on the partnership that the federal government is trying to establish with the community, Williams said. For instance, career professionals such as teachers can participate in internships and work with renowned scientists, lawyers or doctors who are working on current projects, he said. Then they can take that experience back to the classroom or laboratory, he added. Williams, 36, pledges that the site will only improve. His year-long tour as a White House Fellow will be up in six months, but the federal Office of Personnel Management will continue to maintain the site. "It launched with \$400 million in opportunities, and in three weeks we've added \$170 million more. So I'm sure that there are other programs out there that we haven't added to the site," Williams said.