



Driving safety home

Army targets #1 killer of Soldiers

By David Crozier

A 22-year-old Soldier redeploys from Iraq to his home station. After checking in and clearing the unit he jumps into his sports car he hasn't seen in a year and races off on 15 days leave. Following two days of trying to catch up on lost party time with his friends, Day Three takes him down a familiar country road. It's a road he's been on many times before, but this time he's feeling exhilarated, pumped up – and so is the speed of his car.

On Day Four a knock comes to his mother's door. It's the kind of knock a mother should never have to answer – her Soldier son, she is told, was pronounced dead at 3:15 a.m., the result of a car accident. His unit is also apprised of the situation. It will be hard to break the news to his fellow Soldiers. This scenario is played out all too often in today's Army. In fact, according to officials at the Army Safety Center, privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents are the number one killer of Soldiers. And since 1998

speed tops the deadly list as the reason for the accidents.

Failing that, inattention, fatigue, alcohol and drugs and failure to use seatbelts or wear motorcycle helmets round out the five deadliest POV mistakes.





How to get into the POV Risk Assessment Tool

Step 1. Enter, <http://safety.army.mil>

Step 2. Scroll down to **POV Risk Assessment Tool**, click on it

Step 3. Log on using your **AKO e-mail address**

Step 4. Enter your **Travel Information**
Starting point and destination

Step 5. Enter your **Travel Factors**
Travel and vehicle factors

Step 6. Read **Hazard Identification**
Past accident scenarios

Step 7. Read **Hazard Assessment Matrix**
Travel summary, map quest, and weather information

Step 8. **Implement Controls**
What other controls can be implemented to reduce the hazards

Step 9. **Final Risk Assessment**
Print out and counsel the soldier

The problem is so large that it caught the attention of the Secretary of Defense who in early 2003 mandated the Army take steps to reduce accidents and fatalities by 50 percent. The Army's top safety guru, Brig. Gen. Joseph A. Smith, took that mandate to his troops and within a few months they had developed a new tool to help Soldiers and first-line supervisors identify and allay potential deadly risks involved in operating privately owned vehicles. That

new tool is an interactive Web-based application called ASMIS-1 (Army Safety Management Information System) or more commonly called the POV Risk Assessment Tool. Currently the program is set up to compute risk assessments for Soldier travel within the continental United States, but work is underway to allow Soldiers stationed overseas to utilize the new tool. Safety Center officials stated that it should be completed soon.

"I see the POV Risk Assessment Tool as an important element to our POV accident prevention program," said the general. "The key [to reducing accidents] is for Soldiers to be accountable for their own risk assessment. This tool allows their first-



line supervisors to monitor and be aware of the Soldier's travel plans and make adjustments if necessary."

Smith explained that ASMIS-1 is an opportunity for Web-based technology to provide information on route selection, weather conditions and possible risks to the Soldier and then allows for the connection of "leadership dots" to ensure risks are acknowledged and minimized.

"Keeping the responsibility for POV travel at the right level and providing sound travel information will go a long way to improving our safety record," Smith said. "ASMIS-1 used with our POV tool box and other items on our Web site will make a powerful combination."

According to James "Al" Brown, an Army Safety Center traffic safety manager, ASMIS-1 is a "one-stop shop" for Soldiers and supervisors to assess the risks of

POV driving while providing a tool for documenting and counseling Soldiers before they leave on extended trips.

"The program is all about educating you about the risks associated with driving on the road. [The program] asks you questions like how far are you going, what type of car are you driving and whether or not you will be wearing your seatbelt or helmet, if you are riding a motorcycle," Brown said. "Then it will give you controls you can check that reduce the risk. It then takes you to our Risk Management



POV Risk Assessment Tool

file

1 2 3 4 5 6

1: Travel Information

Hazard Identification

David Crozier
MR

Enter your starting point

City
El Paso

State
TEXAS

Country
USA

ZIP
79924

Date of Departure
01/12/2004

Example: 01/01/2003

Enter your destination

City
Washington

State
WASHINGTON D.C.

Country
USA

Look, Listen & Live

- The average family car weighs about 3,000 pounds. What happens to a 12-ounce can of pop when a car runs over it? The can is totally destroyed because the weight ration of the car to the can is 4,000 to 1
- The average freight train weighs 12 million pounds. It outweighs a car by the same ration of 4,000 to 1. When a force of 12 million pounds hits a car, it will be destroyed just like

After you have registered with ASMIS-1 you will be able to enter information for all of your planned trips, whether it is for extended leave or just a quick trip outside your local area. The first step is to tell the program your start point and destination.





Information System (RMIS) where all of our accident [database] information is kept and it will show you accidents that have happened under similar [circumstances] and controls to let you see that if you don't change things this could happen to you."

Smith said the success of the program relies on the Soldiers' honesty when answering the questions. The program is designed to help Soldiers' proceed safely.

"There are no trick questions here. You are going to have to go through and check all these blocks and it's going to be a reminder," he said. "When was the last time many Soldiers took a driving test? Back when they were 16. You forget about things and this program is going to help the Soldiers refresh themselves on the current stuff."

The program begins with the Soldier logging onto the ASMIS-1 Web site. From there the Soldier is asked to input his/her demographics – age, MOS, duty station, experience level, etc. Once the Soldier has filled out the log-on portion of the program, ASMIS-1 sends an e-mail to the Soldier's AKO account with information on how to gain access to the POV Risk Assessment Tool. The Soldier can then logon to the site and enter planned travel information. From there ASMIS-1 takes the Soldier to the next page where Travel Factors will be

determined – type of vehicle driven, use of seatbelts, amount of rest before the trip, start time, alcohol usage and travel dates. The next page of the program is the Hazard Identification section where the Soldiers' information from the previous page is used to determine hazards others have encountered under similar

circumstances. In this section ASMIS-1 informs the Soldier of hazards like fatigue, speeding and more, and then relates those hazards to a real-life accident that took a life. From Hazard Identification, ASMIS-1 then moves to the Risk Management Matrix Assessment where the Soldier receives a risk score. From that page the Soldier moves on to Implement Controls and has an opportunity to see the risks involved based on the Soldier's input of travel

plans and then allows the Soldier to select additional measures to lower that risk. Finally, ASMIS-1 returns the Soldier to the Risk Management Matrix to view the final risk score. If it is still

too high, the program offers more controls.

Of particular significance to the program is the fact that Soldiers using the POV Risk Assessment Tool enter their supervisors' AKO account information when giving their demographic information, Brown explained. Then once a trip report is filed with the POV Risk Assessment Tool, an e-mail can be generated to their supervisors



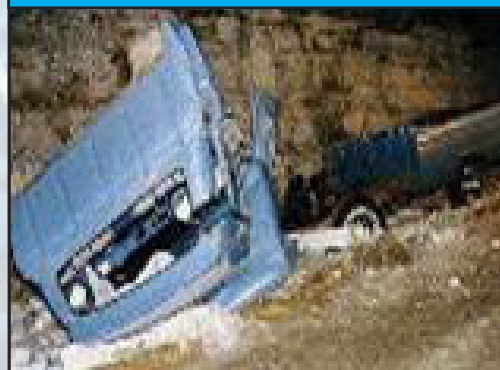
Fatigue: A Soldier's enemy

Who is most likely?

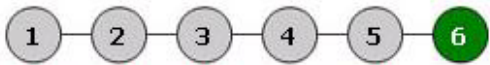
- 25 years or younger
peak age of 20
- Shift worker
- More than one job

Before your trip:

- Get a good night's sleep
- Plan to drive long trips with a friend
- Schedule regular stops every 100 miles or every two hours
- Avoid alcohol and medications (over-the-counter and prescribed) that could impair performance



Throughout the process of entering information on the POV Assessment Tool, the program provides the Soldier with reminders of dangers that may be encountered. ASMIS-1 also provides some tips to combat any identified hazard. The whole idea of the program is to provide Soldiers with the tools they need to have a safe trip.



6: Final Hazard Assessment

Hazard Identification for:

Point of Origin:
Destination:

Risk Management Matrix

		HAZARD PROBABILITY				
		Frequent A	Likely B	Occasional C	Seldom D	Unlikely E
SEVERITY	Catastrophic I	EXTREMELY HIGH		HIGH		
	Critical II	HIGH		MODERATE		
	Marginal III	MODERATE		LOW		
	Negligible IV	LOW				

Travel summary:

Travel Factor	Selected Option
I will be driving a	Pick Up Truck
I will wear my seatbelt at all times on and off duty	Yes
I plan to have the following amount of sleep before I start my trip	Greater than 8 hours
The roadways I will travel will be predominantly	Multi Lane Road
I will take rest stops	Yes - Every three - four hours
I will start my trip at	05:00 - 09:00
Will you have any alcohol before or during your travel?	No
I will be traveling on the following days	Monday
I will be traveling during the	Day
I will check the weather the day prior to and the day of departure	Yes

Once the Soldier has filled out the entire POV Assessment questionnaire and has selected corrective actions to help mitigate any hazards identified by the program, ASMIS-1 gives the Soldier a risk assessment rating. The higher the rating the more likely there is a need for the Soldier to reconsider some of his/her planned courses of action. The program also allows the Soldier to forward this assessment to his/her supervisor to be used as a safety counseling tool.

that outlines the Soldier's planned trip and the risks involved. This e-mail can then become a counseling tool for the supervisor; an opportunity to jointly assess risks and controls before the Soldier departs for the planned trip.

"You have the option of making the trip report official or non-official. But I work for you and you tell me, 'Soldier, you are going on a pass. I want you to fill out the forms on ASMIS-1 so you can go on the pass,'" Brown said. "But then again, let's just say I am going on a pass with my family and I say, 'that's a pretty

good tool. Let me fill it out on my own.' I will have that option."

Once the form is filled out and you have assessed your risks, changed or modified the controls, the program then gives you an opportunity to view the weather forecasts and get a road map from Map Quest®.

"I hope our spiral development will continue to improve this Web-based technology to the point our Soldiers see it as a valuable personal tool for travel," said Smith. "POVs continue to be our number one killer of Soldiers. This has a big impact on our combat readiness at a time when we need our highly trained Soldiers to fight the Global War on Terrorism. Just buckle up, don't speed, get rest before you travel and don't drink and drive, and you will have a good chance to arrive alive."

To learn more about ASMIS-1 log on to <http://safety.army.mil/home.html>, click on POV Risk Assessment Tool under the Quick View section.



WATCH YOUR STEP

Operating in an improvised world

By David Crozier

While there are inherent dangers involved in fighting any war, the Global War on Terrorism has brought today's Soldiers face-to-face with an ever-changing and evolving enemy. The lessons learned from past wars and conflicts still have relevance when navigating today's battlefields, but the doctrine has not been able to keep up with the fast-paced activities of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Like the enemy the Soldiers face, the tactics, techniques and procedures used in the field are constantly changing and evolving, and doctrine is being written on the fly.

And while the battlefields may differ between Iraq and Afghanistan, the dangers of encountering a land mine, unexploded ordinance (UXO) or an improvised explosive device (IED) are very much the same. The creativity and lethality in the use of these devices is unprecedented. No one knows that better than the combat engineers who are dealing with this danger and writing new doctrine every day.

"You can't rely on [current] doctrine to determine where mines may be laid," said 1st Sgt. Frank Barrow, Company B, 41st Engineer Battalion, 10th Mountain Division deployed to Afghanistan. "Afghanistan is a dirty battlefield stemming from



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey A. Wolfe
Members of the 82nd Airborne Division contingent at Cabanas 2002 Chile mark "mines" with a red triangle during an exercise scenario.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Milton H. Robinson

Soldiers assigned to Company C, 27th Engineer Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division participate in a lane training class using the Handheld Standoff Mine Detection Sensor (HSTAMIDS). Members of the Countermine/Counter Booby Trap Center, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., travel to various locations teaching the newly introduced HSTAMIDS to Soldiers. The HSTAMIDS is a metal detector coupled with a ground-penetrating radar system used to locate land mines.

years of fighting and terrain being held by many different militants. Mines are being found in places that doctrinally makes no sense at all. [So] we are updating and refining our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in theater."

Part of that updating and refining comes in the form of employing new equipment.

"We are constantly getting new equipment and assets," he said. "Our SOP is a living document that is updated [routinely] on synchronizing the right assets for clearing minefields and [reducing the amount of mines in the area] for military purposes."

Barrow said the 41st Eng. Bn. is the first unit to use the British-made Joint Service Flail Unit MKIV, commonly called the Aardvark. The Aardvark incorporates a New Holland tractor with a specialized flail assembly that pounds the ground to clear a 3-meter-wide path (9.9 feet) of possible mines. Other equipment being used by the unit includes the Norwegian 910 MCV Hydrema medium flailing vehicle; the South African RG-31 troop transport; and the Buffalo – an American version of another South

African troop transport vehicle that is also used as a mine-clearing platform, control vehicle and weapons platform. When heavy equipment isn't the ticket, Barrow's unit employs the Military Mine Dog Detection Team for area mine reduction and proofing, and the HSTAMIDS (Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System) mine detector. Another helpful piece of equipment the engineers are using is the Matilda Robot. They use the robot to visually inspect bunkers, buildings and enclosed areas where it is too dangerous for Soldiers to go.

In dealing with the new equipment and ever-changing threat, Barrow said the engineers are capturing all the tactics, techniques, procedures and lessons learned into their SOPs in theater and are also sending all the information to the Countermine Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., to be incorporated into the Engineer School curriculum and future doctrine for engineers.

Part of those lessons learned surrounds the effectiveness of the HSTAMIDS versus the more common AN/PSS-12 mine detector.

"The HSTAMIDS is far superior to the AN/PSS-12 for this mission. Because of that we have learned that area clearing can be done safely and relatively quickly with the HSTAMIDS and simple SOPs," said Sgt. 1st Class Steve Bantin, a platoon sergeant in Co. B, 41st Eng. Bn. "The technology in the HSTAMIDS allows Soldiers to recognize many metallic signatures as clutter. This allows the team to avoid probing every metallic hit."

Bantin explained that through systematic training which includes using the HSTAMIDS to search over sterile ground (areas under coalition control), sterile ground with mines, cluttered ground and finally searching over targeted areas, the Soldiers have been able to fine tune the use of the detector.

Minefield Indicators

- Areas avoided by local nationals
- Untended farm fields
- Unused walking trails
- Signs of digging
- Burnt soil
- Evidence of mine-peculiar supplies (wrenches, shipping plugs, etc.)
- Boxes or parcels along the road
- Wires on road surfaces
- Pieces of wood or debris on road
- Signs of road repair (new fill, paving, road patches, ditching or culvert work)
- Mine signs
- Earth craters or berms
- Damaged vehicles
- Dead animals
- Signs of concrete/asphalt removal
- Disturbances in tire tracks
- Disturbances in potholes or puddles
- Odd patterns in the soil
- Ditches

With more than 2,700 different types of mines in the world today, it is impossible to know them all, but deploying units must undertsnad which mines are prevalent in an AO to which they deploy.

Source: CALL Newsletter No. 98-6

"The Soldiers have developed [techniques] over time and can determine the size, shape and density of metallic objects," Bantin said. "Objects can normally be described as 'it sounds like an [anti-personnel mine]' or 'it sounds like a bunch of brass.' This allows the prober to have a better find rate."

Aside from landmines, terrorists are using IEDs in both theaters of operation, but as daily news reports show, the deadly encounters with the devices are more prevalent in Iraq.

"The primary weapon used against coalition forces is the IED. This effort targets the warfighter in movement and has proven to be an effective means of attack," explains Sgt. April Modugno and Sgt. D'Angelo Loyd, 555th Combat Engineer Group deployed in support of OIF. They put together an information paper on IED usage. "The key to IED success lies in the variability and ease of placement. An IED can appear as nearly anything and is difficult to recognize during movement," they wrote.

Because of the poor sanitation system in Iraq and the amount of litter along the roadways, their paper explains, it lends itself to an ideal environment for the use of IEDs disguised as everyday

objects like soda cans, concrete bricks, trash, etc. IEDs can be remotely, command, time-fused or pressure detonated.

"The form of detonation will depend on the type of target. Due to the great variance in emplacement techniques and IED composition, Soldiers cannot predict the location or type of every IED emplacement. Rather Soldiers must focus on early detection and neutralization," the sergeants wrote.

It is lessons like these the Soldiers are learning that have given way to several observations for future-deployed Soldiers to heed.

"Situational awareness is the key and knowing what to do when you encounter a situation," said Command Sgt. Major Gregory Glen of the 555th Combat Eng. Group.



U.S. Army Photo

The British-made Aardvark uses a heavy-duty gear assembly to drive the 72 heavy chains with striker tips in a flailing motion to clear a three-meter-wide path of most every mine it comes in contact with. Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division deployed to Afghanistan were the first to be trained on the equipment and its use in theater.

“Know that the enemy is always watching and adapts to our patterns and tactics. Never be predictable.”

Glen said the most common mistake made by Soldiers in theater is having a lack of understanding of the explosive devices.

“Most of the IEDs/mines are unfamiliar and the device could be booby-trapped or have another anti-defusing device [attached],” said Glen. “Another problem is Soldiers get complacent.”

Bantin relayed the same holds true in Afghanistan.

“Most mistakes occur through a lack of situational awareness or through complacency,” he said. “Several situations occurred during our deployment where Soldiers found themselves going into a minefield because they ignored minefield indicators or they were disoriented. Other mistakes have been made due to Soldiers not knowing what an object was and then deciding to move it. Often times these objects are UXOs.”

The most common telltale signs of mine fields in both theaters of operation include uneven or freshly turned ground; abandoned fighting positions; fencing; blown-up vehicles; improvised markings used by local civilians like rocks, sticks or plastic bottles; and unused travel ways (see associated graphic). As for IEDs, they can be placed in a variety of common objects and have even been found behind posters of Saddam Hussein hanging on walls.



U.S. Army Photo

Using mine detectors and heavy equipment are not the only ways to clear a minefield. Soldiers still probe by hand to help clear safe lanes.

As stated in Modugno’s and Loyd’s information paper on IEDs, the best force protection is education. Part of the education comes in the form of Theater Specific Individual Readiness Training that each Soldier attends prior to being deployed.

According to Barrow, mine awareness training is conducted in several different ways: through performance-oriented training, annual Common Task Training; mine-

awareness training courses and by the Countermine Center Mobile Training Teams. Soldiers also receive numerous briefings about specific mines whenever new information is obtained and available.

Glen echoed Barrow's comments and added that Soldiers in Iraq are trained before each mission.

"We go through troop-leading procedures, operation orders and rehearsals," Glen said. "You always rehearse at a minimum action on the objective and on enemy contact. As we get new equipment, we will go through a train-the-trainer program."

Glen added that as combat engineers, they don't usually defuse mines or IEDs. Instead they either blow them in place or mark the area and call in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal to handle the suspect device.

Even though current doctrine does not cover all aspects of today's operations when it comes to dealing with land mines, UXOs and IEDs, the Army continues to teach Soldiers in the field to watch their step while at the same time collecting valuable lessons learned for future operations.

Army Field Manual 5-34 establishes procedures for dealing with minefields, UXOs and IEDs. Another good source of information is the Center for Army Lessons Learned Web site <http://call.army.mil>.



U.S. Army Photo

Identifying the different types UXOs, IEDs and mines encountered in theater is done through routine field training to ensure the Soldiers can safely watch their step. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the explosive devices has led to Soldiers being killed. According to those deployed in support of OIF and OEF, a lack of situational awareness and complacency are other mistakes Soldiers make when dealing with these devices. No area is considered safe until it has been cleared and marked by the combat engineers.



Photo by Spc. Derek Gaines

Soldiers with the 3rd Infantry Division remove enemy land mines found near Fallujah, Iraq, June 25, 2003, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers are taught to avoid roadway medians, soft shoulders and to look for wires protruding or leading from those areas. When Soldiers discover mines, UXOs or IEDs they should immediately notify their headquarters and secure the area. If they cannot secure the area, Soldiers must properly mark it to warn future convoys.

Living up to the legend: Sgt. Morales, Sgt. Audie Murphy clubs recognize today's best NCOs

Sgt. Chad T. Jones

Weighing in at 98 pounds, Sergeant Morales probably didn't use size to obtain his troops' respect. Neither did the 5-foot-5-inch, 110-pound Sgt. Audie Murphy. Instead, both legendary Soldiers earned their troops' respect with their actions.

Sergeant Morales is a fictional composite that has become a living portrait of the NCO Creed. He led by example, particularly when it meant getting his hands dirty. Morales started every day doing physical fitness training with his troops and spent the rest of it making sure their missions and needs were being met. For three years, Morales, a squad leader for an engineer battalion in Europe, learned about his Soldiers, kept them informed and watched out for their welfare. In return his squad performed at a high level, and none of his troops were reported AWOL.

"The Morales story is an azimuth to guide young NCOs in the right direction, said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston. "The story serves as a yardstick to measure your own performance in all areas from training and performance to taking care of Soldiers and families."

While Morales is a fictitious character created to give NCOs

an example of how to lead, Audie Leon Murphy lived a life fiction writers couldn't create.

Murphy started life as the son of a poor Texas sharecropper, and he almost ended it as one since the Marines and Army Paratroopers turned him away because of his small stature. A third attempt to join turned out to be the charm for Murphy who enlisted as an infantryman, shortly after his 18th birthday, in 1941.

In mid-1943 Murphy received his baptism by fire when the 3rd Infantry Division landed in Sicily. There, despite the best efforts of his commander to keep him from fighting, Murphy distinguished himself as a resourceful and effective Soldier and earned the rank of corporal.

He was promoted to sergeant after his actions during a night patrol in Salerno, Italy, led to the capture of several German soldiers. Murphy triumphed over German soldiers, near fatal wounds and even a case of Malaria before he was discharged from the Army as a sergeant so he could accept a battlefield commission to second lieutenant. On Sept. 21, 1945



Illustration by Spc. Ryan Swanson

Murphy was permanently discharged from the active-duty Army as a first lieutenant. Nearly 60 years later, he is still remembered for his heroic acts as a sergeant, which helped him become the most highly decorated Soldier during World War II.

“Sgt. Audie Murphy was important to the Army because he set the standard for the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers by what he did,” said Staff Sgt. Courtney Moore, a chemical operations specialist with the XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, N.C.

“The way he displayed pure leadership and motivation is what we all should have inside of us,” he said.

In 1988 the leadership at Fort Hood, Texas, formed a club to honor Murphy. Sixteen years later, the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club (SAMC) is considered the most prestigious NCO organization in the Army, according to 1st Sgt. Stuart Edick, XVIII Airborne Corps, who was inducted into the club in 1996.

“To be a member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club proves you have successfully demonstrated you are a leader and, over a period of time, made contributions to the NCO Corps. It means that you take care of yourself, your Soldiers and the Army.” said Edick.

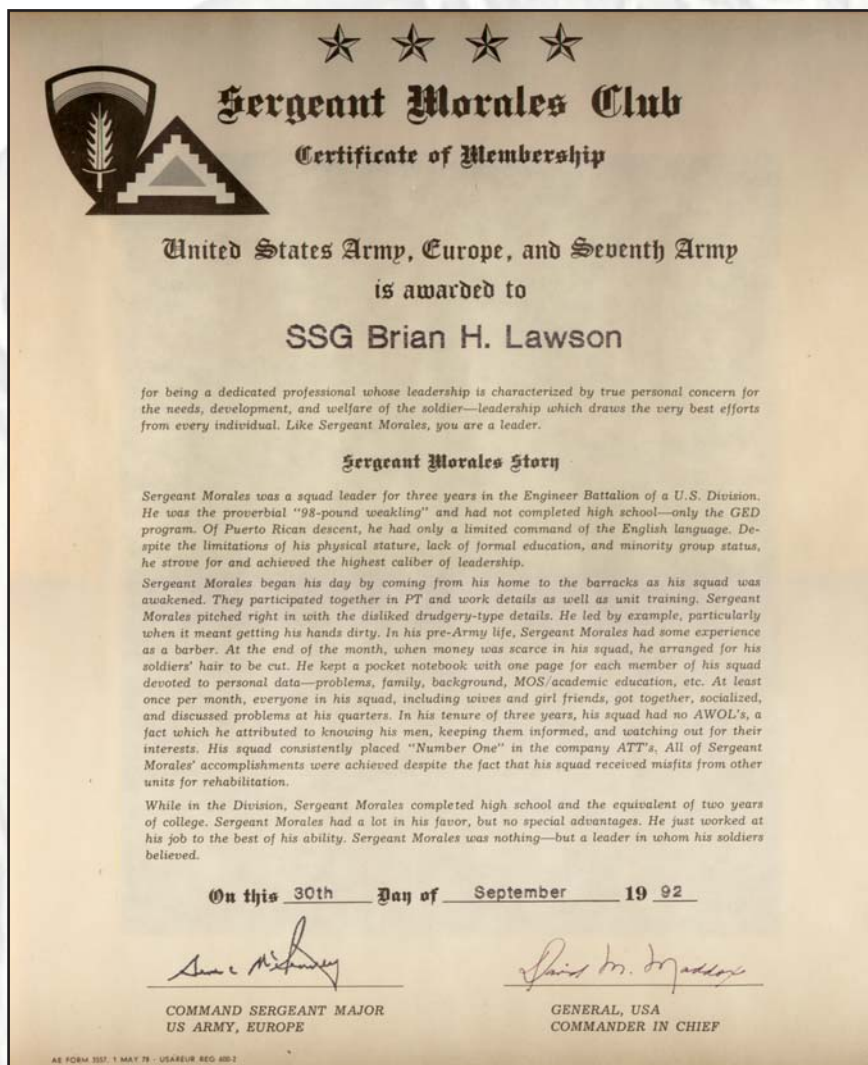
Just as Murphy’s achievements set the bar for NCOs stationed in the United States, the legendary Morales has done the same in Europe.

Soldiers stationed in Europe have honored Sergeant Morales’ integrity and personal courage since 1973, each time an Army NCO is inducted into the Sergeant Morales Club (SMC).

“Being a Sergeant Morales Club member proves that you are the best,” said Master Sgt. Victor Pedraza, G3 NCOIC, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, V Corps, Heidelberg, Germany. Pedraza was inducted into the SMC in 1993.

“Being a member of the Sergeant Morales or Sergeant Audie Murphy clubs for any NCO means belonging to a very elite group of professionals who have demonstrated excellence in leadership,” said Preston, who was inducted into the SMC in 1981 and is an honorary member of the SAMC.

NCOs who hold the rank of corporal through sergeant first class and are serving in a Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) or Forces Command (FORSCOM)



The certificate is given to all Soldiers who earn the right to be a Sergeant Morales club member. Now a sergeant major assigned to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Sgt. Maj. Brian Lawson is proud of his induction.

unit are eligible to become an SAMC member. The Sergeant Morales Club is open to all Soldiers, corporal through sergeant first class, who are serving in Europe.

NCOs who’ve earned the honor of being an SAMC or SMC member can look forward to benefits far greater than the Sergeant Audie Murphy Medallion given to every SAMC member or the plaque given to SMC members, said Edick.

“If two Soldiers have done everything they are supposed to do and one is a member, the SAMC member is [more likely] going to get the promotion,” said Edick.

“Just preparing and living the Morales [and Murphy] stories set NCOs ahead of their peers,” said Preston. “Those NCOs who achieve membership into these elite organizations are sought after for special events because of their credibility.”

Getting a leg up on your peers isn’t the only perk club members receive, said Pedraza.

“By becoming a member you not only know that you are the top of the crop, but there are a lot of senior NCOs that sit on those boards and see a young sergeant trying to prove that he or she is the best and being an SMC member proves that you are.”

Being considered the best of the best and a standards bearer for NCOs to follow is not an easy task, said Pedraza. Neither is becoming a member of one of these elite clubs.

"If I was to say there is nothing hard about becoming a member, I would be lying," said Pedraza.

Soldiers must meet height, weight, physical training and weapons standards to even be considered. But, as Edick said, it takes more than being a good marksman to become a member of one of these clubs.

"An SAMC member is not just involved in self-improvement. [He or she is] someone whose Soldiers are taking correspondence courses and doing well on the Army Physical Fitness Test. It is someone who is pushing Soldiers up because the Army is run [by] Soldiers," said Edick.

Any Soldier wishing to become an SMC or SAMC member must survive a selection process that can last more than six months and begins with a recommendation from a current club member, said Pedraza.

Then, Soldiers must compete in battalion, division and corps selection boards hosted by current club members.

Unlike promotion boards that test a Soldier's technical ability and tactical knowledge, SMC and SAMC board members question Soldiers' tactical knowledge, leadership skills and hands-on skills, said Edick.

For example, instead of asking a Soldier, "What is a zero card?" an SMC board member may hand a candidate a Soldier's zero card and ask the candidate what he'd do to tighten up his Soldier's shot group, he explained.

Candidates field questions about drug abuse, drinking and driving and other controversial issues.

"One way you can't go wrong with the board is to stick with what the Army policy is," said Edick. "Some people try and guess what board members want to hear, but it's not what the board members want to hear, it's the Army's policy and how to apply it."

Soldiers appearing before the boards are also expected to recite the 881-word Sgt. Audie Murphy story or 570-word Sergeant Morales story.

Supportive leadership and present club members can be very helpful to candidates preparing for the boards, said Moore, who was inducted into the SAMC in 2002.

"Leaders can help Soldiers prepare for the board by giving them the opportunity to figure things out for themselves. Specifically those tasks involving Soldier issues," Moore said. Also leaders can help by being honest on a Soldier's NCOER. After all, the mission of the SAMC is to continually develop the Corps of the Noncommissioned Officer," Moore said.

Edick added that every club member has an obligation to help at least one Soldier join the ranks of these elite organizations. That is why he created http://geocities.com/stuart_edick. The Web site helps Soldiers prepare for the SAMC board by providing users with links to Army regulations and field manuals, as well as sample board questions and a direct link to the Sgt. Audie Murphy Web site.

"The hardest part about getting ready for the board was getting my leader's book together," said Pedraza.



Each Sgt. Audie Murphy Club member receives the same medallion.

All candidates must bring their leader's books to their board appearances, "and it needs to be a true leader's book," said Edick. "Not something pretty, but something you are working out of. It has to show you know your Soldiers' strengths and weaknesses."

Soldiers selected to be a member of one of these elite organizations must be prepared to meet the expectations that come with being the best," said Pedraza.

"I expect an SAMC member to be someone I don't have to micromanage," said Edick. "It would be someone I can give a task to and know it will be accomplished."

"Sgt. Morales or [Sgt.] Audie Murphy Club members form an immediate image of their fellow members' capabilities," said Preston. "They have instant credibility when they walk into a new organization because of the high, strict standards established by the namesakes themselves and further enforced by the senior command sergeants major who chair the selection boards."

Nobody knows for sure how high in the ranks Sgt. Morales's character and integrity would have taken him because his fictitious career was cut short by an author's pen. Just like nobody knows how high Murphy could have climbed had he chosen to stay in the Army. Instead he parlayed his heroics into a successful movie career that included his self portrayal in the famous movie "To Hell and Back." He also enjoyed a successful songwriting career.

What is known is that the greatest honor paid to these reknowned Soldiers wasn't the formation of the clubs that bear their names. Instead, it's the quality of the Soldiers who strive to be members in them.

For more information on how to join the SAMC go to <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/regs/r600-14.htm>. Information on the SMC is available in USAREUR Regulation 600-2, (Leadership – USAREUR Sergeant Morales Club).

Letters

SMA book squared away

I was reading the latest issue of the *NCO Journal* (October 2003) and noticed an article on Page 25 named *History of SMA is squared away in new book*. I would be very much interested in purchasing this book or even the original book. I am a retired sergeant major working at Fort Richardson, Alaska, as a GS employee. I worked as the Principal Administrative Assistant for Sergeant Major of the Army [George] Dunaway and [Silas] Copeland from 1968 through 1974. I surely have an interest in that office and the office holders over the years. I knew all before I retired in 1989 as I worked with each during my daily duties for the SMA.

I tried to send you a comment through the *NCO Journal* Web site, but just couldn't get it to work. It asked the question to rate the *Journal* and I rated it superior in all accounts. It is a fine publication and look forward to it each month.

*Bobby W. Alexander
Force Integration Div G3
Fort Richardson, Alaska*

(Editor's note: We cannot determine why your comment never made it through our Website. As with any technology there are glitches occasionally and hope that your one experience does not prevent you from sending us more feedback. As for how to purchase the new SMA book or even how to get a hold of the previous one, you can find it on the Government Printing Office's online bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. In the search engine area for "Search the Sales Product Catalog (SPC):" type "Sergeants Major of the Army. The second reference that comes up should be — Title: Sergeants Major of the Army (Clothbound Edition). The price on the site says it goes for \$40 in the U.S. and \$54 for overseas. The original book — The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps; The Backbone of the Army — is no longer in print. We apologize for not including this information in the original article. Our commandant found a copy of the original and an extra copy of the new book and we have out both copies.)

Addressing the drill sergeant shortage

I am writing on the issue of filling the drill sergeant shortage. This is in reference to the Vol. 12, No. 4 - October 2003 issue of the *NCO Journal*.

There seems to be a shortage of drill sergeants in the military as a whole. The real question is, why? Staff Sgt. Webley made a good point when he said; "Do you think that the volunteer rate would increase if becoming a drill sergeant were open to [Active Guard and Reserve] Soldiers?" in the last issue of the *NCO Journal*.

I am an Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Soldier currently stationed in Milwaukee, Wis. During my entire career in the military, I've come up against situations where the drill sergeant branch has been very particular about their selections. I do understand that it's all about strength management and that's fine. However, look at what a predicament they're in now. This is just like when the Army downsized after Desert Storm. The Army had to come up with ways to get the strength of our forces up again.

If we are supposed to be an "Army of One," why are there a lot of things not open to the Active Guard and Reserve that are open to the other components? Do AGR Soldiers have the same career advancement opportunities as active or Reserve Soldiers? There are limited warrant officer Military Occupational Specialties, recruiting opportunities, no Ranger, Airborne and Air Assault school opportunities, to name a few. Even though an Active Guard and Reserve Soldier is on active-duty, they are not considered active duty Soldiers. If Active Guard and Reserve Soldiers wanted to transfer over to the active component for career opportunities, they cannot without losing rank. So why does my identification card say "Active Duty?" I'm held to the same standards and punished under the same authority as an active duty Soldier, but not fully treated as an active duty Soldier? Do you think that's why the Army slogan was changed from "Be All That You Can Be"?

Don't get me wrong, I love the Army. However, as an Active Guard and Reserve Soldier, I'm probably speaking for many other AGR Soldiers. I would like the opportunity to serve my country like every other Soldier in uniform.

*Master Sgt. Darren L. Williams
7th Brigade, 84th Division (IT)
Milwaukee, Wis.*

Journal seeks your input

The *NCO Journal* welcomes your thoughts and encourages you to write to: The NCO Journal, 11291 SGT E Churchill Street, Fort Bliss, Texas, 79918-8002 or e-mail us at ATSS-SJ-NCOJOURNAL@bliss.army.mil. We reserve the right to edit your comments for clarity, grammar, spelling and length.

Where do you need to be to show your leadership?

Over the years, I've been very fortunate to find strong mentors at every one of my duty stations. Here at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Command Sgt. Maj. Clifford West, the Academy command sergeant major.

On March 3, he retired after 32 years of service. The week before his retirement, West held one last NCOPD with the 700 plus students of the Sergeants Major Course Class 54. West talked to the students about some of the basic ingredients of being a good NCO. They were all simple things that we should all know and do, but his talk was still a reminder of what our responsibilities are as NCOs. Here's what he had to say:

When a Soldier enters his organization, he wants to be his best. How can he do that and how can his NCOs help him do that? Reception and integration counseling is one of the best tools you have. This gives you a chance to explain the standards, discipline and responsibility. You should bring him under your wing and make him part of the organization.

What do you do the first time you realize a Soldier has a problem? If you do recommend nonjudicial punishment, try to speak with him or her about the issue.

If you had the Soldier report to the Staff Duty Officer, he probably didn't learn anything from it. Did a detail sergeant supervise him or did his first-line supervisor do it? On the other hand, if it's the Soldier's first Article 15 and you gave him the maximum punishment, what does he have to look forward to? Remember, retention starts on Day One, not when they get into their reenlistment window.

Also, invest in your unit's family readiness group (FRG). There is no more important time than now to have an FRG. They are not babysitting or taxi services. They are there to educate families on how to take care of themselves, teach them about TRICARE, the chaplain's services, etc.

If you want to be an effective leader, start with yourself. There are three people in each of us: the person you see in the mirror; the person you are with your friends and family; and the person you are with your Soldiers. Your subordinates have to be able to understand you. The relationship you have with your spouse and children is the same relationship you should have with your Soldiers. How do you want to be treated? How do you want your children to be treated if they were in the Army? Dignity and respect goes both ways in the Army.

Look at what gives you inner strength, whether it's your spirituality, your family or whatever. Also look at your physical strength; it will make you a better leader by keeping your mind sharp.



Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Clifford West

Most of all, you have to be predictable. What is the Number One complaint in the Army? Lack of predictability. Soldiers want to know what they are going to be doing that day. The best tool you have that will give your Soldiers predictability is the training schedule.

Set the example for what's important to the unit. Ask yourself, "Where do I need to be to show my leadership?" If you don't show up it's not important. You are your Soldiers' image of perfection, leadership by example. Just talking about it doesn't get anything done. It's your actions. Colin Powell said, "'If it isn't broke, don't fix it.' is a cliché for a complacent leader." You have to check on your Soldiers. Along with that, visit the areas where your Soldiers are being taken care of: the Emergency Room, Army Community Service, the Troop Medical Clinic... Go on sick call and see what your Soldiers have to do.

A normal day for an NCO leader should include training, maintaining, caring and leading. You have to instill in your Soldiers the standards, discipline and responsibility. Have you ever seen a squared-away unit that had trash all over the ground and grass that needs cutting?

We will let a buck sergeant lead a patrol down a back alley in Iraq, but we don't put them in charge during training. In Iraq, they have to make decisions whether to return fire or run for cover. Their ability to make those decisions all reflects on their ability to take charge, their discipline, authority and responsibility. If you expect Soldiers to lay down their lives for you, show them that you care about them, not just professionally but personally.

Even though CSM West has retired, he won't soon be forgotten. His calm, reasonable leadership style and his can-do attitude are still alive in the Army through me and so many other Soldiers that he touched along the way. Thank you, CSM West.

*Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter
Editor in Chief*

Married to the military

Veteran Army couples address the pros and cons

By Sgt. Jimmy Norris

Being a senior Personnel NCO married to a Ranger, Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Pearson knows a thing or two about deployments and separations. She spent a year in Bosnia. Her husband, Sgt. Maj. James Pearson, was in Afghanistan at the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“We’ve probably been separated more than we’ve been together,” she said.

Despite that, Pearson, now a student in the Sergeants Major Course Class 54 at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA), Fort Bliss, Texas, swears being a member of a dual-military couple is a great experience.

“I believe it’s been very positive. The deployments are small stuff,” she said. “Sure we’re away from each other a lot, but we have a good relationship and our strengths complement each other’s weaknesses.”

Being a member of a dual-military couple presents a unique set of challenges, still, many choose to endure the hardships, finding a balance between their marriages and their careers. More than 20,000 dual-military couples currently serve in the U.S. Army. The majority of these couples – 79 percent – enjoy joint domicile assignments, but that doesn’t mean they won’t endure long separations and domestic difficulties.

For Soldiers contemplating trying to marry up matrimony and the military, veteran dual-military couples stationed throughout the Army have plenty of advice to share on the subject.

“Being in the military has strengthened our relationship because every day is a test,” said Pearson whose husband she added, also a Class 54 student, has been a valuable resource for training and motivation. Being a Ranger, he’s been able to help keep her tactical skills up to speed. She, in-turn, has been able to provide him with personnel and finance information.

“We’re a team,” she said. “He’ll use me in a heartbeat, just like I’ll use him. We’re both professional Soldiers and we believe the Army is where we should be,” she said.

“You don’t have to make a choice whether you want to stay in the military or stay together with your family,” said Master Sgt. Yolanda Choates, Public Affairs chief for the U.S. Army Maneuver Support Center, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Meco Choates, is the Protective Services Training Branch course manager for Company A, 701st Military Police Battalion.

“It’s possible to do both; it’s challenging. It’s not easy, but anything worth striving for is never easy.”

Doing both, keeping a family together while accomplishing the missions set forth by the Army, is something many dual-military couples face.

One way to meet the challenge is by enrolling in the Married Army Couples Program (MACP).



Established in August 1983, the MACP is a program designed to help ensure Soldiers married to other Soldiers are considered for joint domicile assignments.

“The hardships associated with maintaining a family while being a Soldier are compounded in a married Army couple,” said Lt. Col. Patrick Sedlack, chief of Plans, Procedures and Operations Branch, Army Human Resources Command. “The MACP was established to help alleviate some of the problems by trying, when possible, to assign married couples at the same location. The goal of the program is to ensure that MACP Soldiers are considered for assignment together as often as possible.”

To enroll in the MACP, married couples need to submit a Department of the Army Form 4187, *Request for Personnel Action*, to their local military personnel office. The personnel office will then process the information and enroll the Soldiers. If the Soldiers are assigned to separate duty stations, each

Soldier must submit a DA Form 4187 to his or her personnel office.

“The Married Army Couples Program works, but it doesn’t guarantee you will be assigned together,” said Staff Sgt. William Herold, a paralegal assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vicenza, Italy. His wife, Sgt. Antoinette Herold, is a paralegal assigned to Headquarters Support Company, Southern European Task Force, Vicenza, Italy.

There are a number of things which can make it difficult for the MACP to station a couple together, said Sedlak.

If two Soldiers have the same low-density MOS, they may be more difficult to station together, he explained. Or if a Soldier has an MOS in which most available assignments are outside the continental United States (CONUS), for example, a Soldier who’s a Korean linguist is married to a Soldier with an MOS in which most available assignments are in CONUS, it may be difficult to station them together.

MACP also applies to Soldiers married to members of other services or to Army Reserve or National Guard Soldiers, but it is more difficult for assignments managers to station them together, Sedlack said.

In addition to the difficulties inherent in stationing Soldiers from different career fields together, there are also problems stationing Soldiers together when they volunteer for special duty.



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Yolanda Choates and her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Meco Choates, coordinate their schedules and talk about how they can assist one another with family responsibilities.

“There are no specific restrictions on the MACP, but some programs and situations are much more difficult to accommodate a [joint domicile] assignment,” said Sedlack.

For assignments such as Drill Sergeant and Recruiter, selectees enrolled in MACP are required to provide a written statement saying he or she understands a joint-domicile assignment may not be possible due to restrictions pertaining to the duty.

“The assignments managers will still consider [joint domicile] for those couples, but want to make sure the Soldiers understand that it is very difficult to provide [it] due to the demands and locations of those assignments,” said Sedlack.

“If it meant being separated for a long period of time, I don’t think either one of us could [provide] such a [written statement],” said Herold. “Our branch manager has worked very hard to ensure we stay together and I think signing a [written statement] wouldn’t stop our branch from working just as hard to keep our family together.”

While some, like Herold, place a lot of faith in their branch managers, others recommend that couples take a more proactive hand in their careers.

“You have to plan properly and manage your own career,” said Sgt. Maj. Henry Garrett. Garrett is the Human Resources sergeant major for Fort Bliss, Texas. His wife, Sgt. Maj. Shirley Garrett is a student in Sergeants Major Course Class 54 at USASMA.

For example, Garrett said when he knew he was due for an assignment outside CONUS, he volunteered for duty in Korea with the hope that his wife would be able to follow. When Shirley became the tactical



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Alison Kempke, Company A, 94th Engineer Battalion, Hohenfels, Germany, displays a picture of her husband Kenneth Kempke, a Cavalry scout assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany. Kempke is currently deployed in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

NCO at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. Henry called his branch manager to find out what was available for him at the same location. The Choates's have made similar sacrifices.

"When we moved here from the [Washington] D.C. area, [Yolanda] had only one position available here," said Sgt. 1st Class Choates. "If she had to choose a position, this probably wouldn't be it, but she made that choice for the family."

"I would rather have been a first sergeant in Korea, but that's not what was best for my family," said Master Sgt. Choates. "We do these things because, being in the Army, you don't always have a choice."

Unfortunately, this strategy also has some drawbacks.

"We had to decline appointments to command sergeant major for the last five years because as command sergeants major it would be harder to station us together," Garrett said.

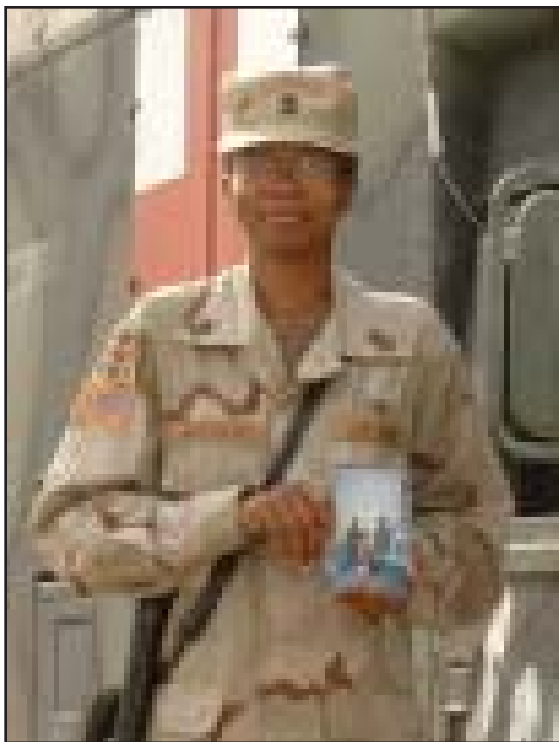
He added, the key to a successful dual-military marriage is consideration for each other's career goals.

"I really didn't want to go to West Point, but I knew Shirley needed something that would help her stand apart from her peers," he said. "If a couple is not in the same career management field, I recommend they learn as much as they can so they know what it takes to advance each other's careers."

Communication, said the Choates, is another important factor in maintaining a successful dual-military marriage.

"You have to communicate," said Sgt. 1st Class Choates. "If you don't let each other know what's going on or how you feel, you're not going to succeed."

"You have to talk about schedule requirements and needs," added Master Sgt. Choates. She said it's important to coordinate things like picking up



Courtesy Photo

Sgt. 1st Class Regina Jamerson, a medic deployed in Iraq, shows a photo of her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Jamerson, who is stationed in Germany. Her current deployment is the first time in her eight-year marriage that she's been separated from her husband.

involves a lot of sacrifice. Some, however, find the sacrifice to be too much.

Being a Soldier is something Staff Sgt. Alison Kempke enjoys. A technical engineer assigned to Company A, 94th Engineer Battalion, Hohenfels, Germany, she is currently deployed in Iraq. And though she's a dedicated Soldier in the War on Terrorism, her husband and two children waiting for her in Germany are never far from her thoughts. Kempke said she finds her job both rewarding and challenging, but she'll be ending her military career after only eight years.

"I love the military and I'd love to stay in, but the separations are hard, especially this one because you don't know when you're coming back," she said. "I'd also like to be around to raise my kids."

Her current deployment is one of many separations she and her husband, Kenneth, a Cavalry scout assigned to the Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany, have been forced to endure.

Still other dual-military couples said while there are difficulties, there are also a number of benefits.

"When things happen that are beyond my control, [my husband] understands because he knows how things are in the military," said Sgt. 1st Class Regina Jamerson, a medic assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 94th Engineer Battalion, currently deployed in Iraq. She's been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since May. This is the first time in her eight-year marriage that she's been separated from her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Jamerson, a medic assigned to 7th Army Training Command, Grafenwoehr, Germany.

"We can relate to each other because we understand how things happen in the Army," she said. "Also, my husband can pack my duffle bag when I have [a field training exercise]. How many civilian spouses can do that?"

children from school, parent/teacher conferences and medical and dental appointments.

Another challenge dual-military couples must tackle are family care plans – written instructions for the care of family members in the event of deployments, temporary duty or field exercises. Dual-military couples have 30 days after arriving at a new unit to produce a valid family care plan, which includes naming both a short-term and long-term care provider. In some cases, finding a short-term care provider at a new duty station can be difficult.

"[Early in our careers], we didn't really know anybody at our next duty stations. We had 30 days to find someone we'd trust enough to take care of our kids, who was willing to do it," said Master Sgt. Choates. "Now that we're older and we've been in a while, we know people at most of our duty stations when we get there."

Master Sgt. Choates added that those who haven't been in the Army long enough to know someone at every duty station should look amongst their coworkers for short-term care providers, because the people a Soldier works with on a daily basis are the ones they get to know first.

"Family [readiness groups] (FRG) are another good source of information," said Sgt. 1st Class Choates. "But you have to go to the FRG meetings. They won't come to you."

Many Soldiers married to other Soldiers agree that being a member of a dual-military couple

SMA Preston takes charge

*I will always place the mission first.
I will never accept defeat.
I will never quit.
I will never leave a fallen comrade.*

Warrior Ethos



By Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter

For Sgt. Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, the Warrior's Ethos is more than a creed; it's a way of life. Or, as Preston would joke, "It's a hooah thing." Three months after moving into his new job, Preston's focus is clear: Continue to fight the Global War on Terrorism, transform the Army and ensure that every Soldier knows "who we are and what our priorities are."

"Every Soldier is a warrior. Regardless of what military occupational specialty you are, we are all trained as infantrymen," Preston said. "In Iraq, a transportation company first sergeant asked me, 'When are we going to get more combat troops to guard my truck drivers on their convoys?' I told him,

'You're not. You have to provide your own security.' We are all riflemen first in basic training. Those fundamental skills are what is going to keep you and your Soldiers alive."

The new SMA brings to the job a first-hand perspective of what it means to live up to the Soldier's Creed and the Warrior Ethos, as well as a first hand perspective of Operation Iraqi Freedom. When Preston took the oath of office Jan. 15, he had barely knocked the Iraqi desert sand from his boots. During his previous assignment as the V Corps command sergeant major, Preston deployed to Iraq where he served as the Combined Joint Task Force 7 command sergeant major.

Preston spoke of the Army in the age of the Global War on Terrorism and what that means to today's Soldiers. "The new policy that all Soldiers will wear the flag on their uniform is a clear signal that we are an expeditionary army and we have to have an expeditionary mindset: We are ready to go when our nation calls.

"For Soldiers who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan or the Balkans, they know what it means to be part of an expeditionary force," he said. "The Warrior Ethos really says what's in their hearts."

Preston knows, however, that sewing flags on uniforms alone will not put Soldiers into an expeditionary mindset. For those Soldiers who have not deployed, Preston said that battle drills, battle-focused training and training as they will fight enables Soldiers to relate based on the experience they get from the training event.

"As Soldiers go through the decision-making process and have to choose between the mission and eating dinner tonight, it helps them understand the four tenants of the Warrior Ethos and puts the priorities into perspective of how to apply the military decision-making process," the 28-year veteran said.

At the same time that Preston is trying to ensure that all Soldiers are trained and ready for their missions, he is also looking ahead at what the Army will look like in the next decade.

"I think the biggest challenge is fighting the Global War on Terrorism; we are a nation at war; and we are going to transform ourselves. My biggest concern is that there is going to be a level of uncertainty out there among the Soldiers. I saw that following Operation Desert Storm," Preston said.

Preston sees communication as the key to minimizing Soldiers' concerns. He encourages leaders to talk about what's happening with the Army and explain to them what lies ahead in the coming months and years.

"We used to teach in leadership that there are 11 principles of being a leader; nine of the 11 principles deal with communication in one form or another," Preston said. "So, the most effective thing you can do as a leader is to communicate. The more we communicate about transformation, specifically getting into the details of transformation, is going to be better for Soldiers. That is the way you combat uncertainty, stop rumors and the gossip mill — by the passage of information."

Preston believes this latest wave of transformation will

help build a stronger Army and a better environment for Soldiers. He reflected on the many transitions the Army has undergone during his career.

“When I compare the Army today to the Army of the mid-70s, it’s a totally different organization. The Army is much better now, the units, leaders, quality of life, command climate, everything,” he said. “I know that during those transition periods, I had a degree of uncertainty, but I always trusted my leaders and the Army’s leaders, and I was always taken care of. My leaders never failed me.”

Preston spent most of his first two months in the job getting to know the Department of the Army staff and testifying before Congress on Army issues. Now, he’s starting to go out and visit Soldiers.

“By definition, I’m the principle advisor on enlisted affairs [to the Army Chief of Staff], he explained. “In a lot of ways, I’m his eyes and ears. I go out, visit units and talk to Soldiers down where the rubber meets the road. Then, I bring those thoughts, ideas and concerns back here to him. At the same time, I’m also taking his message and commander’s intent out to the Soldiers.”

One of his first stops was in Heidelberg, Germany, where he welcomed home V Corps Soldiers returning from deployment. Preston spent three days talking with Soldiers about their transition out of the Iraqi theater and their reintegration to their home bases and families.

“I want to get a feel for what they are thinking about the future, as far as what lies on the horizon and what their concerns are about the future of V Corps and the separate units.”

But while Preston is talking to Soldiers, he’s already identifying and addressing several concerns. He is using his personal experience as well as information he gathers from redeploying Soldiers to address these concerns.

One of his initiatives concerns the Noncommissioned Officer Education System. He is working to ensure that Soldiers returning from deployment have an opportunity to attend NCOES. He is also trying to ensure that the lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are incorporated into needed courses.

The SMA is also adamant about safety initiatives. He is intent on spreading the word to NCO leadership on how they can make a difference that may save a Soldier’s life. One of his major concerns is privately-owned vehicle safety, especially because so many Soldiers are returning from deployments and buying new cars and motorcycles with the money



Photo by Master Sgt. Richard Puckett, Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston checks his leader’s book in between stops visiting Soldiers in the field. The SMA has been busy since his appointment on Jan. 15 getting settled in and testifying before Congress.

they’ve saved. Of the Army statistics on non-battle-related deaths, 40 percent of them are related to POV accidents, Preston said.

“From a leader’s perspective, I think we can do better by talking to Soldiers about their mindset when they are out there on their own time,” he said.

The SMA is also placing a great emphasis on weapons safety, especially in preventing negligent discharges.

“I just think it’s absolutely horrible for a Soldier to survive in a combat zone and then be killed by a negligent discharge. There’s no excuse for it. It’s a responsibility that lies with every noncommissioned officer. Noncommissioned officers are the trainers and enforcers of standards,” he said.

He has tasked TRADOC to come up with one standard for weapons clearing. It’s all about teaching Soldiers what right looks like he said.

“I really think the leadership out there can make a difference by putting some focus on training and talking to Soldiers about the risks involved in those activities.”

Preston is confident that the frequency of deployments for Soldiers will decrease as the Iraqi Governing Council takes charge and the area stabilizes. Just as the numbers of deployed Soldiers in Bosnia and Kosovo have decreased significantly, he believes the number of Soldiers deployed in Iraq will decline, as well.

It seems that part of his confidence is built on recent assurance by Soldiers in Afghanistan that they will capture Usama Bin Laden in the near future.

“They are absolutely confident that we are going to get Bin Laden before the end of the year,” he said. “It’s part of the Warrior Ethos: Never quit. Never accept defeat.”

Fall In

Warrant officers wanted

The U.S. Army is looking for highly motivated Soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen to fill its warrant officer ranks.

Positions are open in all 45 specialties if you qualify. Soldiers with less than 12 years active federal service are encouraged to apply. For more information, contact the Warrant Officer Recruiting Team at <http://www.usarec.army.mil/warrant> or DSN 536-0484/0458.



PCS notices via AKO

The Human Resources Command will use the Internet to maintain up-to-date information on Soldiers and help them manage their careers.

In March, HRC began notifying Soldiers of their next duty assignments within 90 days of departure, by e-mailing the information to their Army Knowledge Online e-mail addresses. Other Web-based initiatives include:

- Sending e-mails acknowledging receipt when Soldiers update assignment preferences on the Assignment Satisfaction Key (ASK).
- E-mail reminders will also be sent out to get Soldiers to update their contact information 90 days after arriving at their new duty stations. Then Soldiers will be reminded to update their assignment



preferences on ASK after being stationed stateside for 24 months, 18 months for those overseas.

Commanders will still find out about Soldier assignments through traditional means, but the HRC-GRAM, formerly known as the PERSGRAM will be phased out. Soldiers will be able to find out about assignments through e-mail notification or by calling an Interactive Voice Response System at 1-800-FYI-EPMD. In the future, HRC also plans to expand its Web initiatives and get away from using Department of the Army Form 4187, *Personnel Action Request*.

Force stabilization initiatives

The Department of the Army recently announced Force Stabilization and its two manning initiatives for designated installations that will fundamentally change how the Army assigns Soldiers to its warfighting forces.

Beginning in July, the Army will begin implementing the new stabilization initiative, two complementary manning strategies designed to stabilize the force and provide

Soldiers and families increased predictability in its Continental United States-based force.

Under the new stabilization strategy, Soldiers will remain at their initial installations for six to seven years. Soldiers can expect to be stationed at one installation through squad leader (or equivalent) positions. Leaders will attend leader development schools such as the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course in a temporary travel status and return to their stabilized family at their home station.

During the stabilization period, the Soldier remains stabilized with his/her family at one installation. The Soldier and his/her unit will deploy to meet Army requirements, redeploy to home station and refit the unit based on normal attrition.

Once an NCO becomes qualified as a squad leader or equivalent, assignment to other duties including drill sergeant, recruiter and other career-enhancing positions is more likely. Under the stabilization, some Soldiers may not be able

to remain in their current organization based on unit structure and professional development needs.

These Soldiers will be reassigned on the installation if possible, or fill other requirements if no vacancies exist at their installations.

The Army will continue to rotate Soldiers to Korea for one-year tours. After completion of their tours, they will return to their stabilization installation where their family remained.

Under Unit Focused Stability, Soldiers will arrive, train and fight together.

It sets the conditions for the Army to build better and more deployable combat units. Soldiers assigned under Unit Focused Stability will serve in a unit for the duration of the unit's operational cycle of approximately 36 months.

During this time, they can expect to complete an operational deployment or rotation of six to 12 months.

For additional information about Force Stabilization visit the Web site at: <https://www.stabilization.army.mil>.

Flag-patch direction explained

While U.S. Federal Code calls for the canton to always be positioned to an observer's left, Army regulations call for the flag "to be worn so that to observers, it looks as if the flag is flying against a breeze," said Human Resources Command Public Affairs Officer, Lt. Col. Stanley Heath. The rule dates back to the Army's early history, when both mounted cavalry and infantry units would designate a standard bearer, who carried the Colors into battle. As he charged, his forward momentum caused the flag to stream back. Since the Stars and Stripes are mounted with the canton closest to the pole, that section stayed to the right, while the stripes flew to the left.

Fall In

Leavenworth hosts German award competition

The 326th Area Support Group (ASG), U.S. Army Reserve, will sponsor the 2004 German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency. The event begins May 20 at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and ends May 23.

The event is designed to test a Soldier's endurance and military skills through a series of tough qualification standards set for German soldiers. Some of the activities include individual marksmanship, athletic ability, first-aid and swimming.

The final event will be the road march, May 23. Based on age and gender, the length of

the road march can be up to 30 kilometers (18.7 miles).

The event is open to all U.S. Army Soldiers. Based on performance, Soldiers can earn a gold, silver or bronze badge that is authorized for wear with the U.S. Army Class "A" and Army Blue uniform. The badge is not authorized for wear with the Class "B" or mess uniforms.



There are different categories of events based on the Soldier's ability, age and gender.

For additional information and a complete list of requirements, contact Maj. Dwayne Dunlap at (913)-334-4230, ext. 107 or 1-800-226-4219, ext. 107 or at wayne.dunlap2@usarc-emh2.army.mil.

Did you know?

Changes to NCOERs

According to Military Personnel message 04-105, accomplishments at NCO Education System courses, other schools generating Department of the Army Form 1059 (*Academic Evaluation Report*) or performance occurring during non-rated periods will not be annotated on the NCO Evaluation Report. For more information, call (703) 325-8009 or (317) 510-3696.

Sgt. major board

The next centralized board for promotion to the ranks of command sergeant major and sergeant major, as well as selection for attendance to the Sergeant Major Course, is scheduled to take place June 3 through 24. Results are scheduled to be released in late August.

The next centralized board for promotion to master sergeant is scheduled to take place Oct. 5 through 29. Results are scheduled for release in late January 2005.

Changes to retention control point for staff sgt.

According to Military Personnel message 04-109, the retention control point (RCP) for staff sergeants is changed from 20 to 22 years. This change is necessary to retain NCO experience and support the recently approved end strength increase. The end strength increase was not approved as a permanent change, therefore, this change affects those staff sergeants

who have an Expiration Term of Service (ETS) on or before Sept. 30, 2005 except for Soldiers in MOS 14R, 14S and 42L which are considered overstrength.

Soldiers whose records do not indicate that he or she has an approved retirement and whose current ETS is on or before Sept. 30, 2005 will have their ETS dates adjusted to their new RCP by HRC. New ETS should be visible on local database within 10 days from date of this message.

Soldiers who have an approved retirement before Sept. 30, 2005, but had not updated their Assignment Eligibility and Availability Code, should contact their career counselors to change their ETS back to the approved retirement dates.

Soldiers who have approved retirement dates may request that the retirement request be withdrawn, which can be approved by the local retirement authority as an exception to the policy outlined in AR 635-200, Chapter 12-15.

Commanders who determine that selected Soldiers should not be retained will forward recommendations to the first colonel in the chain of command. If recommendation is to deny a Soldier continued service to the new RCP, the first colonel commander will forward the recommendation to HRC (AHRC-EPR) under the provisions of Para 1-8e AR 601-280. upon approval, HRC will readjust Soldiers ETS.

For information call Ronald Canada at (703) 325-6807 or DSN 221-6807.

Promotion changes for stop-lossed NCOs

With the implementation of Stop Loss, the Army will authorize promotion consideration as an exception to policy for Soldiers who would normally be ineligible for further consideration due to their retention control point.

The Army is implementing this for each of the centralized boards for the duration of the Stop Loss beginning with the master sergeant board that was held in February 2004.

This exception to policy applies to promotion consideration only and impacts only those Soldiers who are assigned to the units affected by the Stop Loss order (OIF2/OEF5).

Fall In

Soldiers can now view ERBs online

Soldiers can now review their personnel information on the Web in a one-page Enlisted Records Brief. The ERBs went online in December.

MyERB is now on the U.S. Army Human Resources Command homepage at <https://www.hr.c.army.mil>. Click on the "Active" link at the bottom right. The MyERB link is in the left chimney.

The Web-based solution enables active-duty Soldiers to prepare for promotions by reviewing their records summary via the Internet. Army Reserve Soldiers can review some of their personnel information via the My2Xcitizen portal. Both the HRC and Reserve portals require Army Knowledge Online accounts and passwords. The ERB contains personnel information used to manage professional development, assignments and promotions such as assignment history, civilian and military education, awards and decorations, special skills and individual qualifications.

The ERB will eventually incorporate enlisted official photographs from the Department of the Army Photo Management Information System.

Fisher House explains rules for free airline tickets

Through the Operation Hero Miles program, the Fisher House Foundation hopes to give away free airline tickets to reunite Soldiers hospitalized during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom with their family members. The tickets, donated by Anheuser-Busch, are available to Soldiers undergoing treatment as either an in- or outpatient at military hospitals as a result of service in Iraq, Afghanistan or surrounding areas. There are two categories of eligible recipients for the free airline tickets:

☐ Qualifying Soldiers may receive a free round-trip airline ticket from the medical center to their home and return if they are not eligible

for government-funded airfare.

☐ Qualifying Soldiers may receive free round-trip tickets to enable their family or close friends to visit them while they are being treated at the medical center.

Currently, all donated tickets are for flights marketed or operated by American Airlines, American Eagle and American Connection.

The flights carry restrictions, including 14-day advance purchase, a Saturday night

stay, a maximum stay of 30 days and

blackout dates. Tickets are for travel in economy class, and seats may be limited.

No changes can be made after the ticketing departure date, and changes made

before the departure date are subject to a \$100 service charge.

The foundation cannot assist with local travel, overnight accommodations, meals or other expenses. Requests for tickets must originate with the Soldier.

Requests should be sent by fax to the Fisher House Foundation (301) 294-8562. The request form may be obtained at the foundation's Web site, <http://www.fisherhouse.org>.

Fisher House Foundation is accepting airline tickets or vouchers from donors.

The foundation cannot accept frequent-flier miles.

Individuals and organizations wishing to donate miles can do so through the program's Web site <http://www.heromiles.org>.

Anthrax, smallpox vaccines safe

The military's anthrax and smallpox immunizations are safe to administer to Soldiers, a senior military medical officer said.

Concerns about the safety of the vaccines have been checked, with findings



provided to federal health officials and civilian physicians. Soldiers are medically screened before receiving the vaccines. Very few serious effects have been attributed to the administration of the vaccines.

New combat disability Web site

A new Web site designed to assist disabled military retirees apply for Combat-Related Special Compensation went online recently.

The U.S. Army CSRC Web site, located at www.csrc.army.mil, provides program guidelines used to determine eligibility for combat-related disability benefits and application procedures for the program.

CSRC allows eligible disabled military retirees to collect payments for both their military service and their service-related disabilities.

Automatic qualifiers include any military retiree with at least 20 years of service who is rated 10 percent disabled by injuries related to the award of a Purple Heart. Payments are retroactive to June 1 for those whose disability occurred before that date. Those who are approved will begin receiving payments about 60 days after approval. Payments are deposited concurrently with standard military pay.

CSRC eligibility includes disabled military retirees with 10 to 100 percent VA disability rating and Reservists and National Guard retirees eligible at age 60 who receive retired pay.



Fall In

R&R program funds more travel

Soldiers coming home on rest and recuperation leave will now have their travel expenses covered to the airport closest to their destination.

Until now, servicemembers and DoD civilians participating in the R&R program received free transportation

from Kuwait City, Kuwait, to Rhein Main Air Base in Germany, Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI), Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport or Atlanta International Airport.

From there, they had to cover any remaining airline travel expenses.



Now, the program will cover the cost of travel from BWI to a commercial airport closest to their leave destination. Soldiers make travel arrangements and receive airline tickets to their final R&R destination at the travel office in Kuwait.

Those who paid for airline tickets between Dec. 19 and

Jan. 1 can get the cost reimbursed on the travel voucher they submit upon their return to Kuwait from R&R leave.

To be eligible for the R&R program, a Soldier must have served at least three months but no more than 11 months in theater in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom.

Junior Soldiers get 'COOL' options for promotion points

Junior Soldiers in a handful of job specialties have another option to gain promotion points through Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL), a program which offers civilian vocational certifications for military experience.



As of Jan. 11, skill-based certifications from civilian sources are worth 10 points each. Ten career fields are currently participating in the initiative: Adjutant General, Air Defense Artillery, Aviation, Engineer, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Signal, Transportation, Army Medical Department and Public Affairs.

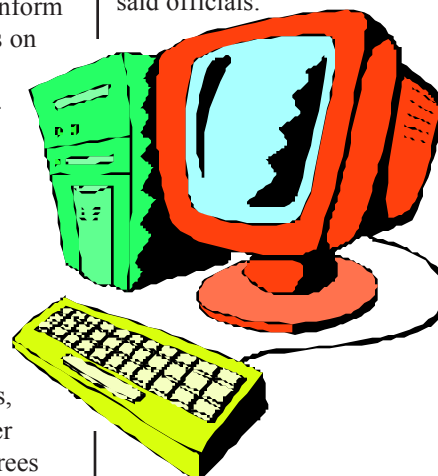
Promotable specialists and sergeants can add up to 50 points in technical certificates. The points will remain valid as long as the certificate is valid. The certificates can be added as a promotion action when a Soldier has at least 20 points to add. The COOL Web site serves as the home station to get information on the credentialing for points initiative.

In the future there will be a link to Army Regulation 600-8-19, *Enlisted Promotions and Reductions* to provide more information on promotion policy on the COOL Web site at <https://www.cool.army.mil>.

Exchange task force launches Web site

The group charged with putting together a detailed plan to integrate the three military exchange services into one organization has launched a Web site, www.unifiedexchange.org. The Unified Exchange Task Force, formed in May, is using the new site to inform exchange beneficiaries on what is happening to their benefits. According to a news release, the site will provide continuous updates about the task force's work on the proposed military-exchange integration. Web site visitors will be able to access progress reports, presentations and other data. Soldiers and retirees

will be able to track proposed changes in the way exchanges do business and the potential impact on them. The site will offer a list of frequently asked questions, and visitors can also submit questions and comments. If Congress decides to approve any exchange merger, it would still be "some years" down the road before the actual move, said officials.



Reserves Civilian Employment Information Program announced

Implementation of a mandatory Reserve component Civilian Employer Information database began March 31, culminating a yearlong effort to establish a Department of Defense-wide system to capture and understand who employs the 1.2 million members of the seven reserve components.

Soldiers of the Army National Guard, airmen of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, sailors of the Navy Individual Ready Reserve, and Coast Guard reservists can begin entering their employer data on a new Defense Manpower Data Center Web site, at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-ReservePortal>. Army Reserve Soldiers will enter their employer data at <https://www.hrc.army.mil>. Navy selected reservists will enter their employer data at <https://nsips.nmci.navy.mil>. Marine reservists will enter their employer data at <https://www.mol.usmc.mil/>.

The goal is to populate and maintain an employer database with 95 percent accuracy of the Selected Reserve and 75 percent accuracy of the Individual Ready Reserve.

For further information, contact Lt. Col. Bob S. Stone, bob.stone@osd.mil, (703) 693-8617.

Roll call

o f t h e f a l l e n

Operation Iraqi Freedom

1st Lt. Michael R. Adams, 24, Seattle, Wash., March 16, 2004 ♦ Sgt. Glenn R. Allison, 24, Pittsfield, Mass., Dec. 18, 2003 ♦ Capt. Matthew J. August, 28, Rhode Island, Jan. 27, 2004 ♦ Sgt. 1st Class Henry A. Bacon, 45, Wagram, N.C., Feb. 20, 2004 ♦ Spc. Solomon C. Bangayan, 24, Jay, Vt., Jan., 2, 2004 ♦ Spc. Edward W. Brabazon, 20, Philadelphia, Pa., March 9, 2004 ♦ Spc. Todd M. Bates, 20, Bellaire, Ohio, Dec. 10, 2003 ♦ Sgt. Benjamin W. Biskje, 27, Vermillion, Ohio, Dec. 24, 2003 ♦ Sgt. Jarrod W. Black, 26, Peru, Ind., Dec. 12, 2003 ♦ Chief Warrant Officer (CW2) Michael T. Blaise, 29, Tennessee, Jan. 23, 2004 ♦ Capt. Ernesto M. Blanco, 28, Texas, Dec. 28, 2003 ♦ Spc. Joseph M. Blickenstaff, 23, Corvallis, Ore., Dec. 8, 2003 ♦ Pfc. Joel K. Brattain, 21, Santa Anna, Calif., March 13, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Jeffrey F. Braun, 19, Stafford, Conn., Dec. 12, 2003 ♦ Staff Sgt. Steven H. Bridges, 33, Tracy, Calif., Dec. 8, 2003 ♦ Staff Sgt. Christopher Bunda, 29, Washington, Jan. 25, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Richard A. Burdick, 24, National City, Calif., Dec. 10, 2003 ♦ Pfc. Charles E. Bush Jr., 43, Buffalo, N.Y., Dec. 19, 2003 ♦ Cpl. Juan C. Cabralbanuelos, 25, Emporia, Kan., Jan. 31, 2004 ♦ Spc. Jocelyn L. Carrasquillo, 28, Wrightsville Beach, N.C., March 13, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Roland L. Castro, 26, San Antonio, Texas, Jan. 16, 2004 ♦ Spc. Doron Chan, 20, Highland, N.Y., March 18, 2004 ♦ Spc. Jason K. Chappell, 22, Hemet, Calif., Jan. 24, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Thomas W. Christensen, 42, Atlantic Mine, Mich., Dec. 25, 2003 ♦ Command Sgt. Major Eric F. Cooke, 43, Scottsdale, Ariz., Dec. 24, 2003 ♦ Sgt. Dennis A. Corral, 33, Kearney, Neb., Jan. 1, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Ricky L. Crockett, 37, Broxton, Ga., Jan. 12, 2004 ♦ Pvt. Rey D. Cuervo, 24, Laguna Vista, Texas, Dec. 28, 2003 ♦ Staff Sgt. Craig Davis, 37, Opelousas, La., Jan. 8, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Ervin Dervisli, 21, Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 24, 2004 ♦ Spc. Michael A. Diraimondo, 22, Simi Valley, Calif., Jan. 8, 2004 ♦ Chief Warrant Officer Patrick D. Dorff, 32, Minnesota, Jan. 25, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Joe L. Dunigan, Jr., 37, Belton, Texas, March 11, 2004 ♦ 2nd Lt. Seth J. Dvorin, 24, New Jersey, Feb. 3, 2004 ♦ Spc. Marshall L. Edgerton, 27, Rocky Gap, Ga., Dec. 11, 2003 ♦ Sgt. Michael J. Esposito, Jr., 22, Brentwood, N.Y., March 18, 2004 ♦ Spc. Rian C. Ferguson, 22, Taylors, S.C., Dec. 14, 2003 ♦ Staff Sgt. Clint D. Ferrin, 31, Picayune, Miss., March 13, 2004 ♦ Spc. Jason C. Ford, 21, Bowie, Md., March 13, 2004 ♦ Spc. Luke P. Frist, 20, West Lafayette, Ind., Jan. 5, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Nichole M. Frye, 19, Lena, Wis., Feb. 16, 2004 ♦ 2nd Lt. Jeffrey C. Graham, 24, Elizabethtown, Ky., Feb. 19, 2004 ♦ Spc. Christopher A. Golby, 26, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 8, 2004 ♦ Sgt. 1st Class Richard S. Gottfried, 42, Lake Ozark, Mo., March 9, 2004 ♦ Spc. Charles G. Haight, 23, Jacksonville, Ala., Dec. 26, 2003 ♦ Capt. Kimberly N. Hampton, 27, Easley, S.C., Jan. 2, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Stephen C. Hattamer, 43, Gwinn, Mich., Dec. 25, 2003 ♦ Chief Warrant Officer (CW2) Brian D. Hazelgrove, 29, Fort Rucker, Ala., Jan. 23, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Kenneth W. Hendrickson, 41, Bismarck, N.D., Jan. 24, 2004 ♦ Sgt. 1st Class Gregory B. Hicks, 35, Duff, Tenn., Jan. 8, 2004 ♦ Spc. Christopher K. Hill, 26, Ventura, Calif., March 11, 2004 ♦ Sgt. Keicia M. Hines, 27, Citrus Heights, Calif., Jan. 14, 2004 ♦ Sgt. 1st Class James T. Hoffman, 41, Whitesburg, Ky., Jan. 27, 2004 ♦ Spc. Christopher J. Holland, 26, Brunswick, Ga., Dec. 17, 2003 ♦ DA Civ. Fern L. Holland, 33, Arlington, Va., March 9, 2004 ♦ Master Sgt. Kelly L. Hornbeck, 36, Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 18, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Bert E. Hoyer, 23, Ellsworth, Wis., March 10, 2004 ♦ 2nd Lt. Luke S. James, 24, Oklahoma, Jan. 27, 2004 ♦ Sgt. Linda C. Jimenez, 39, Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 8, 2003 ♦ Spc. Nathaniel H. Johnson, 22, Augusta, Ga., Jan. 8, 2004 ♦ Chief Warrant Officer Phillip A. Johnson, Jr., 31, Alabama, Jan. 8, 2004 ♦ Capt. Gussie M. Jones, 41, Louisiana, March 7, 2004 ♦ Sgt. Curt E. Jordan, Jr., 25, Green Acres, Wash., Dec. 28, 2003 ♦ Staff Sgt. Lester O. Kinney II, 27, Zanesville, Ohio, Jan. 27, 2004 ♦ Spc. Joshua L. Knowles, 23, Sheffield, Iowa, Feb. 5, 2004 ♦ Capt. John F. Kurth, 31, Wisconsin, March 13, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Anthony S. Lagman, 26, Yonkers, N.Y., March 18, 2004 ♦ Staff Sgt. Sean G. Landrus, 31, Thompson, Ohio, Jan. 29, 2004 ♦ Spc. Tracy L. Laramore, 30, Okaloosa, Fla., March 17, 2004 ♦ Chief Warrant Officer Matthew C. Laskowski, 32, Phoenix, Ariz., Feb. 25, 2004 ♦ Spc. Roger G. Ling, 20, Douglaston, N.Y., Feb. 19, 2004 ♦ Sgt. Daniel J. Londono, 22, Boston, Mass., March 13, 2004 ♦ Chief Warrant Officer Ian D. Manuel, 23, Florida, Jan. 8, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Holly J. McGeogh, 19, Taylor, Mich., Jan. 31, 2004 ♦ Spc. Michael M. Merila, 23, Sierra Vista, Ariz., Feb. 16, 2004 ♦ Sgt. Eliu A. Miersandoval, San Clemente, Calif., Jan. 31, 2004 ♦ Spc. Michael G. Mihalakis, 18, San Jose, Calif., Dec. 26, 2003 ♦ Pfc. Jesse D. Mizner, 24, Auburn, Calif., Jan. 7, 2004 ♦ 1st Lt. Adam G. Mooney, 28, Cambridge, Md., Jan. 25, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Stuart W. Moore, 21, Livingston, Texas, Dec. 22, 2003 ♦ Sgt. Travis A. Moothart, 23, Brownsville, Ore., Jan. 27, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Luis A. Moreno, 19, Bronx, N.Y., Jan. 29, 2004 ♦ Sgt. Cory R. Mracek, 26, Hay Springs, Neb., Jan. 27, 2004 ♦ Spc. Nathan W. Nakjs, 19, Corvallis, Ore., Dec. 16, 2003 ♦ Sgt. William J. Normandy, 42, Augusta, Ga., March 16, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Cody J. Orr, 21, Ruskin, Fla., Jan. 17, 2004 ♦ Spc. Gabriel T. Palacios, 22, Lynn, Mass., Jan. 21, 2004 ♦ Capt. Eric T. Paliwoda, 28, Texas, Jan. 2, 2004 ♦ Pfc. James D. Parker, 20, Bryan, Texas, Jan. 21, 2004 ♦ Pfc. Jerrick M. Petty, 25, Idaho Falls, Idaho, Dec. 10, 2003 ♦ Sgt. Ivory L. Phipps, 44, Chicago, Ill., March 17, 2004 ♦ Spc. Justin W. Pollard, 21, Foothill Ranch, Calif., Dec. 30, 2003 ♦ Spc. Larry E.

Polley, Jr., Center, Texas, Jan. 17, 2004 ◆ Staff Sgt. Richard P. Ramey, 27, Canton, Ohio, Feb. 8, 2004 ◆ Spc. Eric U. Ramirez, 31, San Diego, Calif., Feb. 12, 2004 ◆ Pfc. William C. Ramirez, 19, Portland, Ore., Feb. 11, 2004 ◆ Spc. Tamarra J. Ramos, 24, Quakertown, Pa., Oct. 1, 2003 ◆ Sgt. Edmond L. Randle, 26, Miami, Fla., Jan. 17, 2004 ◆ Staff Sgt. Aaron T. Reese, 31, Reynoldsburg, Ohio, Dec. 10, 2003 ◆ Sgt. Thomas D. Robbins, 27, Schenectady, N.Y., Feb. 9, 2004 ◆ Sgt. Randy S. Rosenberg, 23, Berlin, N.H., Jan. 24, 2004 ◆ 1st Lt. Edward M. Saltz, 27, Bigfork, Mont., Dec. 22, 2003 ◆ Spc. Marc S. Seiden, 26, Brigantine, N.J., Jan. 2, 2004 ◆ Sgt. Keith L. Smette, 25, Fargo, N.D., Jan. 24, 2004 ◆ Capt. Christopher F. Soelzer, 26, South Dakota, Dec. 24, 2003 ◆ Pfc. Armando Soriano, 20, Houston, Texas, Feb. 1, 2004 ◆ Pfc. Kenneth C. Souslin, 21, Mansfield, Ohio, Dec. 15, 2003 ◆ Maj. Christopher J. Splinter, 43, Platteville, Wis., Dec. 24, 2003 ◆ Pvt. Bryan N. Spry, 19, Chestertown, Md., Feb. 13, 2004 ◆ Spc. William R. Sturges, Jr., 24, Spring Church, Pa., Jan. 24, 2004 ◆ Pfc. Ernest Harold Sutphin, 21, Parkersburg, W. Va., March 18, 2004 ◆ Staff Sgt. Michael J. Sutter, 28, Tinley Park, Ill., Dec. 26, 2003 ◆ Sgt. Patrick S. Tainsh, 33, Oceanside, Calif., Feb. 11, 2004 ◆ Spc. Christopher M. Taylor, 25, Daphne, Ala., Feb. 16, 2004 ◆ Master Sgt. Thomas R. Thigpen, Sr., 52, Augusta, Ga., March 16, 2004 ◆ Staff Sgt. Roger C. Turner, Jr., 37, Parkersburg, W. Va., Feb. 1, 2004 ◆ Staff Sgt. Kimberly A. Volez, 27, Carlisle, Pa., Dec. 14, 2003 ◆ Sgt. Jeffrey C. Walker, 33, Havre de Grace, Md., Jan. 8, 2004 ◆ Chief Warrant Officer Aaron A. Weaver, 32, Florida, Jan. 8, 2004 ◆ Spc. Christopher J. Rivera Wesley, 26, Portland, Ore., Dec. 8, 2003 ◆ Sgt. Elijah Tai Wahi Wong, 42, Mesa, Ariz., Feb. 9, 2004 ◆ Chief Warrant Officer Stephen M. Wells, 29, Massachusetts, Feb. 25, 2004 ◆ Spc. Michael R. Woodliff, 22, Port Charlotte, Fla., March 2, 2004 ◆ Sgt. Michael E. Yashinski, 24, Monument, Colo., Dec. 24, 2003 ◆ DA Civ. Robert J. Zangas, 44, Prince William County, Va., March 9, 2004

Operation Enduring Freedom

Staff Sgt. Shawn M. Clemens, 28, Allegany, N.Y., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Spc. Robert J. Cook, 24, Sun Prairie, Wis., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Sgt. Benjamin L. Gilman, 28, Meriden, Conn., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Sgt. Nicholes D. Golding, 24, Addison, Maine, Feb. 13, 2004 ◆ Spc. David E. Hall, 21, Uniontown, Kan., Feb. 25, 2004 ◆ Spc. Adam G. Kinser, 21, Sacramento, Calif., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Mancini, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Staff Sgt. James D. Mowris, 37, Aurora, Mo., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Pfc. Kristian E. Parker, 23, Slidell, La., Sept. 29, 2003 ◆ Sgt. Theodore L. Perreault, 33, Webster, Mass., Dec. 23, 2003 ◆ Spc. Justin A. Scott, 22, Bellevue, Ky., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Sgt. Danton K. Seitsinger, 29, Oklahoma City, Okla., Jan. 29, 2004 ◆ Sgt. Roy A. Wood, 47, Alva, Fla., Jan. 9, 2004

(Editor's note: This list is a continuation of the previous lists printed in the October 2003 and January 2004 issues. The names that appear in this Honor Roll are those that have been released since Dec. 10, 2003 and are current as of March 22, 2004.)

*You Are Not
Forgotten*





Photo courtesy of the Office of the Sgt. Maj. of the Army

SMA Preston stresses focus, fight, win

Without a doubt these are some of the most fast-paced times the U.S. Army has ever faced. We are an Army at war supporting a nation at war. We are balancing transformation with ensuring that we are prepared to fight and win no matter where we are needed.

It will not be easy; but, bringing freedom to 40 million people in the past two years was not either. I saw every day what the U.S. Army was truly made of as the Combined Joint Task Force 7 and V Corps command sergeant major. Our Soldiers are smart, tough, loyal, heroic and innovative. I was constantly amazed by their ingenuity. It carries on the traditions established by the generations of Soldiers who came before us. I truly believe that each of you represents the 21st century's first generation of heroes.

That is why it so important we continue to stay focused on the tasks ahead that we face. We have to use every tool at our disposal to make us better than the enemy. One of those tools is education and that's where your *NCO Journal* is important.

I know it's not easy to get your hands on it in Iraq, Afghanistan and other far-away locations; but, if you download it or get a copy in the mail — use it and share it. Each issue is packed with lessons learned, “how-to’s” and stories that matter to NCOs and their Soldiers. This issue is no exception.

The editorial team has put together a great issue for you. I encourage you to take a look at the POV Risk Assessment Tool article. As Soldiers return from deployment, leaders need to keep POV safety on their minds. Thousands of Soldiers have bought new cars and motorcycles while deployed or immediately upon return. We have to do all we can to keep our new combat veterans and their families alive.

The Voter's Assistance piece is especially important right now. The 2000 election was extremely close and you have fought and bled for the right to vote. Don't waste it.

The Audie Murphy/Sgt. Morales Club story is another one I hope you enjoy. As a member of both clubs I have always valued the lessons I learned about history, leadership and soldiering from my preparation and commitment to the ideals these organizations espouse.

This issue is packed full of other topics to include, mine awareness, a new Web site called Hooah 4 Health at <http://www.hooah4health.com>. In addition, I share my philosophy and what I think is important to our NCO Corps and the Army.

Don't forget to check out archived editions of the *NCO Journal* at <http://usasma.bliss.armymil/Journal>. The last issue included a great farewell piece on our 12th Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley. He did a great deal for our Army and this is a fitting tribute to his legacy.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the field as I travel around the Army. Be safe and stay focused. The coming months will be especially hectic as we deploy and redeploy nearly 300,000 Soldiers to and from Iraq. You are making a difference in the Global War on Terrorism.

God Bless Each of You!
HOOAH!

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston
13th Sergeant Major of the Army

New Soldier's Guide now available

By Sgt. Jimmy Norris

Soldiers seeking information on anything ranging from combat skills to Army programs now have a handy pocket-sized resource to answer their questions.

The Soldier's Guide, Field Manual 7-21.13, recently received its first update since 1961.

Initially released on the Internet in October, the hard copy became available Feb. 2. *The Soldier's Guide* differs from the *NCO Guide* because the *NCO Guide* is intended specifically for NCOs, while the *Soldier's Guide* is meant to be a practical guide for all Soldiers, regardless of rank.

"Some of the topics came from [the original Soldier's Guide] but the Army has changed dramatically since 1961," said Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) William Jemison, a training specialist at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy's Directorate of Training and Doctrine. Jemison was a member of the three-person contract team who updated the guide.

The team queried senior NCOs and officers from throughout the Army about what information all Soldiers should know, before determining what information to put in the updated guide.

The guide contains information on leadership, selected tasks, military history, customs and courtesies, training, counseling and more. New additions to the guide include information on selected combat tasks, Internet resources, the Soldier's Creed and the Warrior Ethos.

"The [*Soldier's Guide*] ended up being a ready reference condensed into one book so Soldiers don't always have to search through a bunch of references to find the information they need," said Jemison.

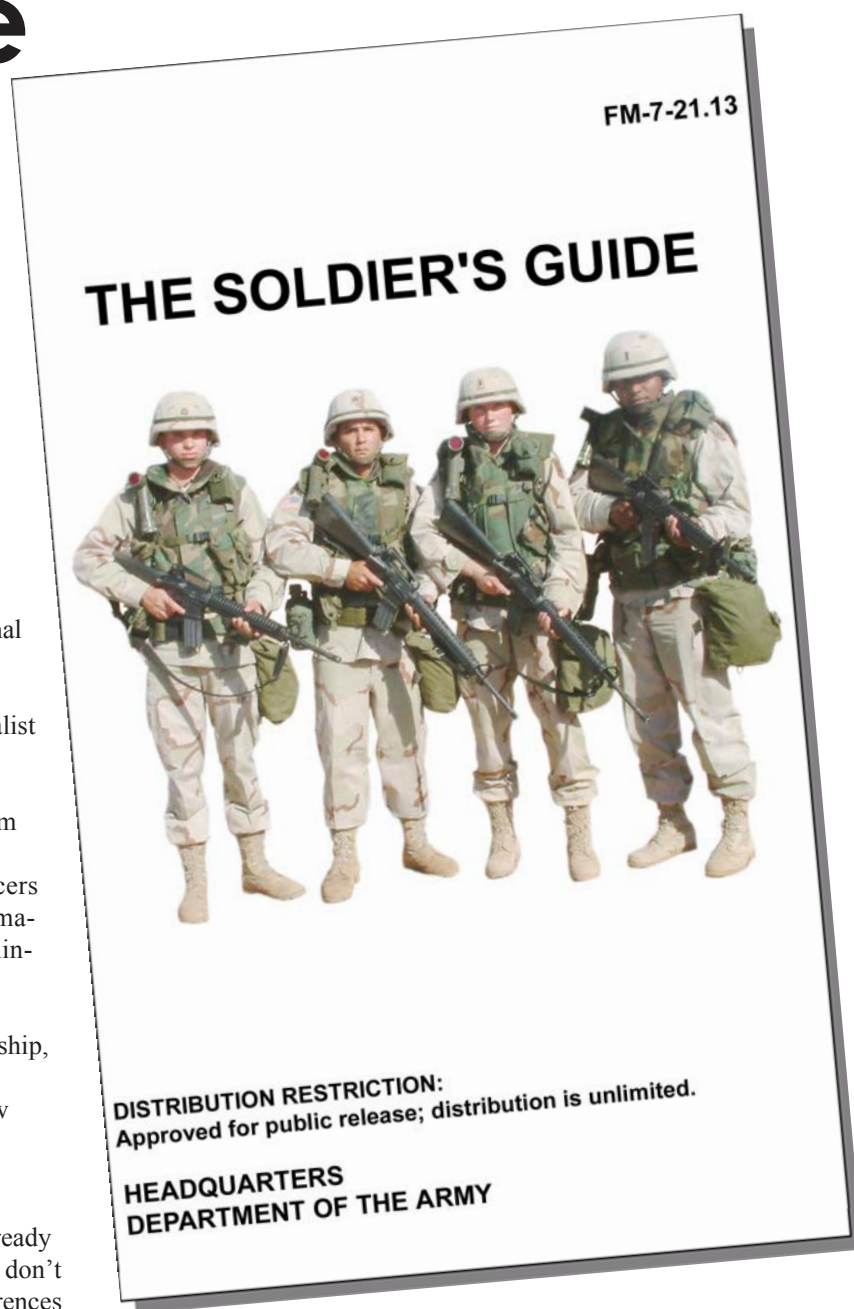
The information in the book is also cross referenced with corresponding field manuals and Army regulations so Soldiers can easily figure out where to find additional information.

The Soldier's Guide will be an invaluable resource for Soldiers of every rank and career branch, said Jemison.

"Soldiers will want this book because it contains a lot of good information that will aid them in becoming a total Soldier. We don't [always] tell the Soldiers why things are done a certain way. This book tells Soldiers why they're being counseled, why they need to train and [why] things

are done the way they are," he said. "Whether [a Soldier] decides to get out or decides to make the Army a career and then retire, this book can assist [him or her]. Leaders will want it because it will help them give guidance to the Soldiers and answer their questions."

The new *Soldier's Guide* is being issued to Soldiers during their advanced individual training (AIT). Soldiers who've already graduated AIT may order the book through their unit's normal publication channels or they can download it from http://www.army.mil/usapa/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/fm7_21x13.pdf.



SUICIDE:

COMBATING THE UNSEEN ENEMY

Stories by Sgt. Jimmy Norris

No one expected Sgt. John Doe to take his own life. Just days before, he seemed relatively normal, despite the searing 120-degree heat in the Iraqi desert.

The offensive phase of the operation was over. The Soldiers had started moving into fixed structures, which meant they could finally contact family members back home.

Doe was initially excited about the prospect of speaking to his wife. But after a few phone calls, he confided to his fellow Soldiers that things weren't going so well at home. His wife was talking about divorce.

When Criminal Investigation Command investigators concluded that Doe's fatal gunshot wound was self-inflicted, others in his unit were left with unanswered questions.

Why hadn't anyone noticed? What did they miss? Was there anything they could have done?

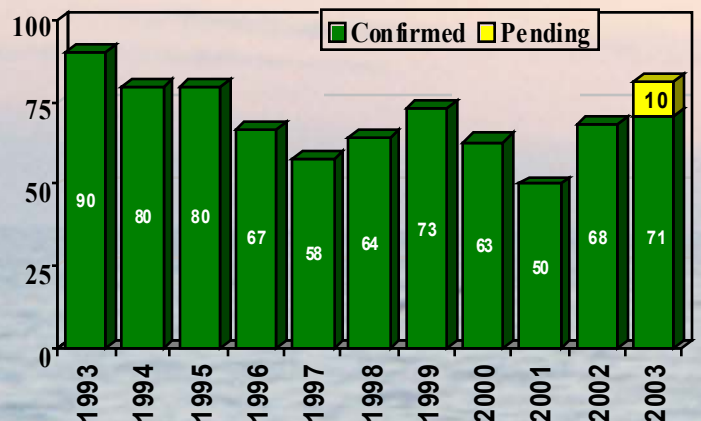
Many blamed themselves for not noticing – for not saving Doe. He'd never displayed any of the warning behaviors leaders are trained to look for.

"Herein lies the challenge with suicide prevention in the Army," said Lt. Col. Jerry Swanner, manager of the Army's Suicide Prevention Program. "Many Soldiers don't show those typical suicidal warning signs that are discussed during our standard suicide prevention training classes. Their actions, especially the younger Soldiers, can be very impulsive, allow-

ing for little time for an intervention. That impulsive nature combined with constant access to lethal means can lead to tragedy."

This is especially tragic within the Army, Swanner said, because there are so many people – chaplains, behavioral specialists and even battle buddies – that are able and willing to help.

The suicide rate throughout the Army has been on the rise for the past two years. In 2002, 68 Soldiers committed suicide. In 2003, 73 Soldiers committed suicide. This rise in suicide rates came on the heels of an all-time low of 50 in 2001. That



The above graph represents the number of suicides Army-wide during the years 1993 through 2003.

was the first full year after the Army revamped its suicide prevention program late in 2000.

“We were really encouraged,” said Swanner. “Then Sept. 11 hit and increased security demands, operational tempo and deployments all potentially led to an increase in suicides. Suicide is a serious problem regardless of the numbers,” he added, and there are a number of steps leaders can take to combat the problem.

Of great importance in the fight against suicide is the role of the Army’s leaders, Swanner explained. First-line supervisors, in particular, can play a major role in preventing suicide.

By knowing their Soldiers and being aware of what’s going on in their lives, first-line supervisors should look for changes in behavior that might signal a problem.

Behaviors indicating a problem may include impulsiveness or violent traits, self-injurious acts, excessive anger or agitation, excessive alcohol use, heavy smoking, or a sleeping or eating disorder.

Supervisors should also look for potential triggers for suicidal behavior. These behaviors generally include one or more of the following: some sort of loss, such as the death of a loved one; loss of a significant, intimate relationship, such as divorce; separation or break-up; loss of a child custody battle;

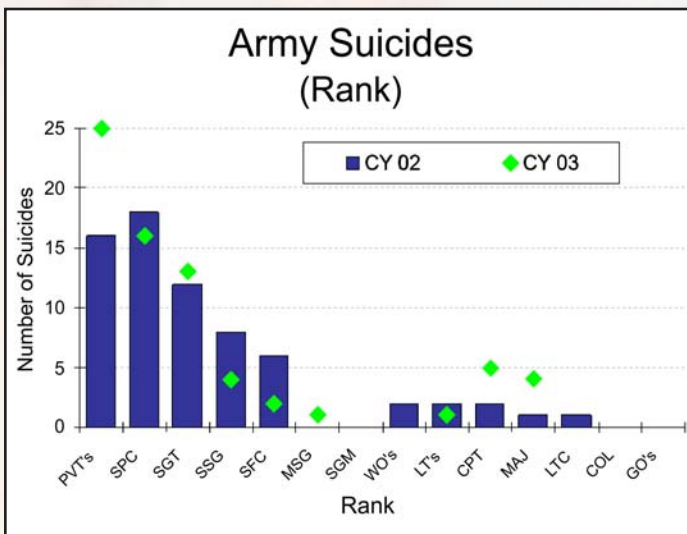
loss of friendship or social status; loss of a job or rank (UCMJ or civilian legal action, or separation from the Army); loss of freedom (incarceration); loss of financial security; loss of self-esteem (humiliation, passed over for promotion or educational opportunity); loss of hope or having a feeling of helplessness); and loss or change in lifestyle (unwanted PCS move or a major deployment).



“What [first-line supervisors] need to do is to know what is happening in the lives of their Soldiers – to be able to ask questions and recognize changes in behavior when Soldiers are experiencing stress,” Swanner said. “Some of our first-line supervisors are saying ‘suck it up and drive on. This is the Army.’ Although that might be appropriate to encourage someone on a long road march, that doesn’t help the person who’s feeling depressed or hopeless. We need to instill in our junior leaders that you can still be tough and encourage health-seeking behavior.”

First-line supervisors also need to know what agencies and individuals are available to help Soldiers during stressful times. There are numerous helping agencies available to Soldiers, whether deployed or in a garrison environment. Supervisors need to promote these programs to Soldiers so they can receive

The graph below illustrates a breakdown of the Army’s suicides by rank during calendar years 2002 and 2003.



the help they need to see them through a stressor, without it turning into a life crisis, explained Swanner.

Supervisors need to know what helping agencies are available at the installation, such as the Family Life chaplain who can help with marital problems and Army Emergency Relief that can help with financial emergencies, he added.

“One of the things first-line supervisors can do is really stress to their Soldiers they need to get help early, before performance is impacted, before the Soldier [becomes a] danger to himself or others,” he said.

One way Soldiers can get the help they need, Swanner said, is Army One Source (see related story on Page 15), a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week counseling and referral service that Soldiers can use free of charge to obtain help without having to worry about any negative impact on their careers.

Using Army One Source, Soldiers can talk to a counselor up to six times about a single problem. If the Soldier needs further counseling, he or she will be referred to a counselor in the Soldier’s local area.

“A lot of Soldiers are afraid that if they go to mental health, it’ll hurt their careers,” Swanner said. “Army One Source was implemented to make behavioral healthcare more accessible to Soldiers.”

Having access to behavioral healthcare is important, Swanner said, because within the United States, it is estimated that about 90 percent of those who commit suicide are depressed or have another diagnosable mental or substance abuse disorder. Mental disorders are the second-leading cause of Soldier hospitalizations, the leading cause of hospital-related lost duty days and the leading cause of premature attrition from the military.

Another way Soldiers can get help without worrying about the stigma associated with a visit to the mental health clinic is through the Unit Ministry Teams (UMT). The UMT chaplains have experience connecting Soldiers with helping agencies, Swanner said. Chaplains assigned to UMTs are also the ones in a unit most likely to have the training necessary to assess a Soldier’s risk of suicide.

See SUICIDE, Page 15

Training helps leaders 'ASIST' Soldiers in crisis

As early as basic training, Soldiers learn the techniques needed to help keep their comrades alive on the battlefield – techniques such as how to perform CPR, bandage a wound or splint a broken bone.

But not all injuries are of the physical kind. Some come in the form of depression, stress or emotional trauma.

Experts from the Army's Suicide Prevention Program say injuries like this can cause a dangerous sense of hopelessness and despair in some Soldiers, which could lead to thoughts of finding permanent solutions to temporary problems.

"When someone is contemplating suicide, that person is bleeding emotionally and they need first aid," said Chaplain (Maj.) Randy Brandt, chief of Plans, Training, Operations and Resource Management for the Army Medical Command Chaplain's Office, Alexandria, Va.

Just as Combat Lifesaver training teaches Soldiers to "Keep them alive until the medics arrive," the Army offers Soldiers similar training to help prevent suicides.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is a 14-hour block of instruction taught by ASIST master trainers certified by Living Works Education, designed to help leaders identify when a Soldier is at risk of suicide. Students who receive the training learn what signs and symptoms to look for in Soldiers who might be at risk as well as what questions to ask at-risk Soldiers.

The program explains the steps to take to find out if a Soldier has been contemplating suicide and if he or she has a plan. Under the program, unit ASIST representatives also learn to look for certain characteristics in a Soldier, such as a strong family or religious background. These factors help unit representatives determine the risks (called "risk alert") that the Soldier may be facing.

The ASIST program employs a river analogy where the river's tributaries represent the stresses and emotional traumas that can lead to suicidal thoughts. The main body of the river represents thoughts of committing suicide; and the waterfall represents a suicidal act, such as an attempt or actual death. By determining "where in the river" a Soldier is, ASIST-trained personnel can determine the Soldier's potential risk for suicide and help the at-risk Soldier get the help he or she needs.

"It's triage at the unit level," said Lt. Col. Jerry Swanner, manager of the Army's Suicide Prevention Program. He added that ASIST is designed to help keep Soldiers from harming themselves and place them in the care of professional help.

"ASIST is an integral part of the Army Suicide Prevention Program. Chaplains, behavioral health professionals, counselors, suicide prevention program managers and even the leadership – from division commanders down to company and battery commanders –



have universally endorsed it throughout the Army," said Swanner. "It refines personal counseling techniques, provides the skills to professionally estimate the risk of suicide, gives [unit representatives] the confidence to engage those who are considering suicide and, most importantly, protects those who are at risk of committing suicide."

ASIST differs greatly from the standard suicide prevention training Soldiers receive semiannually because it is more in-depth and teaches leaders to confront the Soldier's problems directly by asking the Soldier a series of questions, Swanner said.

"Suicide prevention training is designed to make people aware of a potential problem and let them know [what] resources are available. ASIST is a leadership tool to help take care of Soldiers at the battalion level. ASIST gets people trained to provide good initial care to Soldiers who need it," said Chaplain (Maj.) Jeffery Zust, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. Zust is one of 120 master trainers who were initially trained to teach the ASIST program when the Army adopted it in 2001.

The Army's Mental Health Advisory Team has recommended at least one ASIST-certified Soldier per company for units scheduled for prolonged deployments, Swanner said.

"When units get forward deployed, companies can get scattered and the chaplain could be miles away. Commanders need someone who can assess the risk of suicide," he said.

Unit leaders interested in scheduling ASIST training for their Soldiers should contact their chaplains for information. Swanner said units can have as many ASIST-trained Soldiers as they can spare for training. There are no specific eligibility requirements, and Soldiers of any rank may attend.

"It's more important [than what rank they are] that Soldiers selected to attend are respected and trusted by others in the unit, and that they're mature enough to handle the topic," said Swanner.

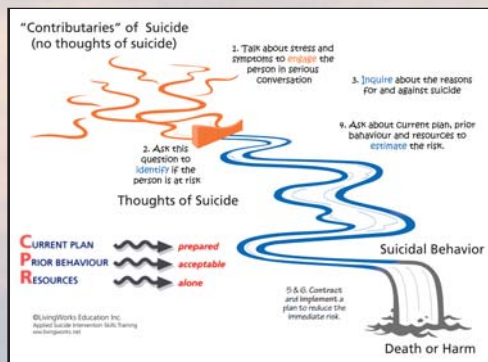


Illustration courtesy of Living Works Education

The illustration above depicts the "river analogy" used in the ASIST program's suicide prevention training. The red "tributaries" represent stress and emotional problems, the blue "river" represents suicidal thoughts and the grey "waterfall" represents suicidal behavior.

Army One Source provides help for almost anything

One of the most important things a leader can do in caring for his/her Soldiers is be aware of helping agencies and know how to put Soldiers in touch with them, said Lt. Col. Jerry Swanner, manager of the Army's Suicide Prevention Program.

That job became a lot easier with the August release of Army One Source, a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week call-in, counseling and referral service.

"Army One Source was created to provide a private resource for Soldiers and families because we know people are reluctant to use their chain of command when having personal and family issues," said Delores Johnson, director of Family Programs, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, Alexandria, Va. "This is an excellent way to provide the privacy people want and the services they need."

Described by one official as a virtual family support program, Army One Source is staffed by professional personnel who can address a wide variety of problems.

"Active duty, Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers and their family members can look to Army One Source for help with almost anything," Swanner said.

The service offers advice on legal issues, family problems, financial management, stress reduction, emotional well being, deployment issues and more. Through Army One Source, patrons are eligible to attend up to six pre-paid, face-to-face counseling sessions with a variety of counselors, state licensed in their areas of expertise and located within 30 miles of the person being referred. At this time, the service is only available to patrons in the continental United States.

"One of the great things about Army One Source is a Soldier coming back from a deployment who's starting to feel awkward about being home and recognizes his [or her] problem could get bigger, can now get help early, before the problem ever has to go through his [or her] chain of command," according to Swanner. "Or, if a couple is having minor problems, they can get help before the situation deteriorates."

Being completely confidential, the help Army One Source offers will never show up in a Soldier's medical or personnel records. Officials stressed the fact that Army One Source is not a resource for long-term mental health problems. If a Soldier's problems cannot be resolved by the end of the allotted six



sessions, they will be referred to his/her TRICARE provider.

Army One Source also provides research services to help callers find necessary services such as local daycare providers or information for the purchase of new cars.

Approximately 5,000 Soldiers and family members have used the service as of February. Officials hope once more people find out about the service, more people will avail themselves of the service. Soldiers can reach Army One Source by calling one of the following numbers:

From the United States: 1-800-464-8107

From Germany, Italy or the Netherlands: 00-800-4648-1077

From South Korea on a DSN line: 550-ARMY (2769), on a commercial line 001-800-4648-1077

From Japan: ITJ: 0041-800-4648-1077; IDC: 0061-800-4648-1077; KDD: 001-800-4648-1077; NTT: 0033-800-4648-1077

Callers who experience difficulty can call their operator and make a collect call to 1-484-530-5889

TTY/TDD: 1-800-346-9188. In Spanish call 1-888-375-5971.

Army One Source can also be accessed on the Internet at <https://www.armyonesource.com>. To log on the user ID is "army" and the password is "onesource."

SUICIDE

Continued from Page 13

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) (see related story on previous page), is a suicide-intervention training program that is used by caregivers to assess a Soldier's suicide risk level.

UMT chaplains and drill sergeants currently receive the training. In the near future, Soldiers assigned to line units will receive the training. The goal is to have ASIST-trained NCOs in every battalion, according to Chaplain (Maj.) Jeffrey Zust, the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (Fort Bliss, Texas) chaplain.

"I think the ASIST program is an onramp to helping the Army's leaders in dealing with the issue of suicide," Zust said. "It sensitizes leaders to suicide [concerns] and gives them a tool to respond to Soldiers in crisis using the dynamics of suicide prevention."

Swanner said it's important to remember that demographics don't always tell the whole story. In 2003, about

half the Soldiers who committed suicide were junior enlisted Soldiers. Eighty percent of that total number were male Soldiers.

Despite the statistics, leaders should watch out for anyone who may be going through a crisis, Swanner said.

"Everybody has a first-line supervisor and privates are not the only ones killing themselves. Master sergeants and majors also killed themselves in 2003. Given certain circumstances, we could all be at risk for suicide," Swanner said. "The Army has had localized successes [with suicide prevention] at installations. When you look at those successes, the common denominator is there's been a renewed emphasis by the leadership to address suicide prevention. We can make a difference if we're fully engaged and have the support of all leaders."

Since resources vary between installations, the best place to start looking for information about the ASIST program or for a list of organizations that can help Soldiers with your Unit Ministry Team.

It's your future; vote for it



By Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter

The American Revolution and the signing of the U.S. Constitution symbolized America's independence and set the stage for a democratic government in which the President would be chosen by a vote of the people. It wasn't until February 1870 that the 15th Amendment gave African Americans the right to vote. Fifty years later, in 1920, the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote.

Since the American Revolution, Americans have been fighting for their rights to vote for a democratic government, a Constitutional right American Soldiers are ready to defend any day. In today's world, American Soldiers aren't only defending democracy in America; they are helping to establish democracy in Iraq.

"You can use the example of what we're doing in Iraq right now as an example of why Soldiers need to vote," explained Sergeant Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston. "Right now, you have Soldiers over there that are giving 25 million Iraqis the greatest gift of all – their freedom."

In 2000, 130 million Americans were registered to vote. Of that

number, 111 million actually voted, according to U.S. Census Bureau. Approximately 1.4 million servicemembers and 1.3 million family members were eligible to vote, according to James H. Davis, the Army Voting Action Officer. If every eligible servicemember and military family member voted, they would represent more than 4 percent of the total ballots cast in that national election.

To ensure that every Soldier, family member and DoD civilian has the opportunity to make his or her voice heard in future elections, the Army has launched this year's voter campaign slogan: "It's your future. Vote for it."

"Historically, Soldiers try to stay out of the politics side of the house," Preston explained. "Because we are Soldiers and we follow the orders of the President of the United States as our commander in chief. We have a tendency to stay out of the political battle that takes place between opponents who are competing for the presidency. I think it's important that Soldiers understand the views of those who are competing for that position, so that their voices can be heard through their votes, based on where the support for them and their military career can best be heard.

"The Army's Voting Assistance Program aims to ensure that Soldiers, their families and the DoD civilians overseas can exercise their right to vote," Davis said. Those eligible to vote via absentee ballot can apply by completing the federal postcard application, Standard Form 76, which can be obtained from the Unit Voting Assistance Officer. Instructions are also available at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's Web site, <http://www.fvap.gov>.

"Not only does this register them for an absentee ballot, but it also registers them to vote in federal, state and local elections," Davis said. "It takes care of everything in one step." Davis recommends that Soldiers send in the federal postcard every year because they may have had an address change since the last election.

Soldiers may only register to vote in their state of legal residence. Soldiers may change their state of legal residence each time they transfer, but they can only have one legal residence at a time.

VOTE!

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act requires states to allow absent military voters and Americans living overseas to use absentee ballots in elections for federal office; however, a few states have extended this right to state and local elections as well, according to Davis.

Typically, Americans who have applied for absentee ballots receive their ballots approximately a month before the election. If they don't receive their ballots, those who are overseas can use the Federal Write-in Application Ballot, Standard Form 186. While the SF 186 is primarily for federal elections, some states do accept it, Davis said. The SF 186 allows citizens to write in their votes and send them in by deadline. Registered voters who do not receive their absentee ballots can obtain an SF 186 from their unit's voting assistance officer.

Each Army unit and each Army installation is required to appoint a voting assistance officer (VAO). The VAO's primary mission is the traditional voting assistance provided to Soldiers, their family members and DA civilians who are stationed overseas. The VAO can distribute the Federal Post Card Application, a postage-paid form that potential voters complete to register to vote via absentee ballot. The form also provides local election officials with the absentee voter's mailing address so he or she can mail out the actual absentee ballot. The VAO can assist Soldiers in filling out the postcard which must be completed and mailed in no later than Aug. 15.

The second mission of the VAO is to educate every Soldier about the importance and usefulness of voting and the

opportunities they have to participate in the voting franchise if they so desire, Davis explained. "The voting assistance officer's goal is to inform people on how to vote, who to go see and make them aware," he said. "It is important that every American citizen of voting age votes. Voting is how you influence who is in charge of your quality of life. It is your entitlement as an American citizen."

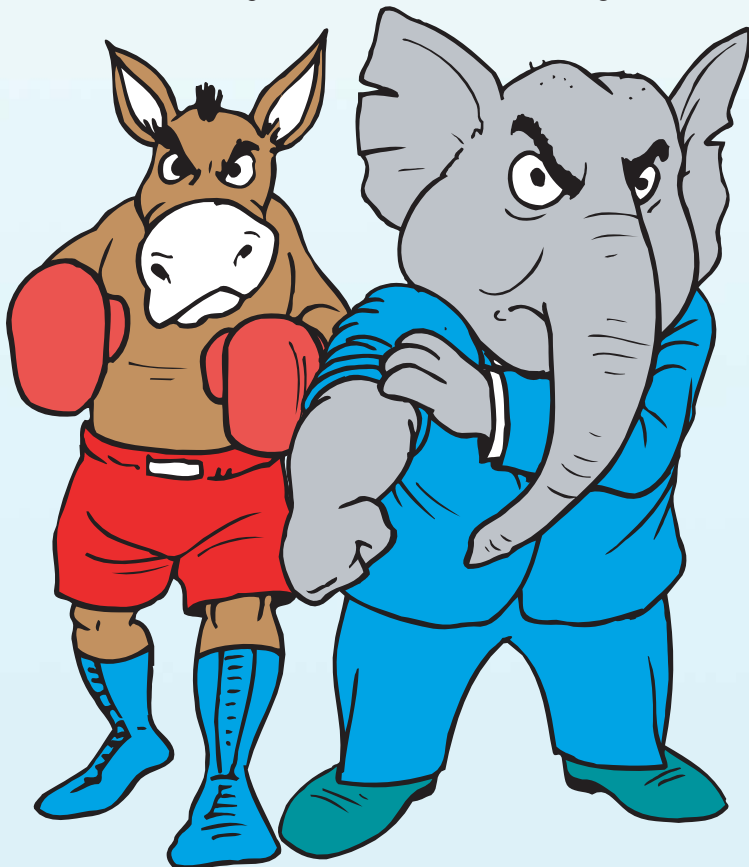
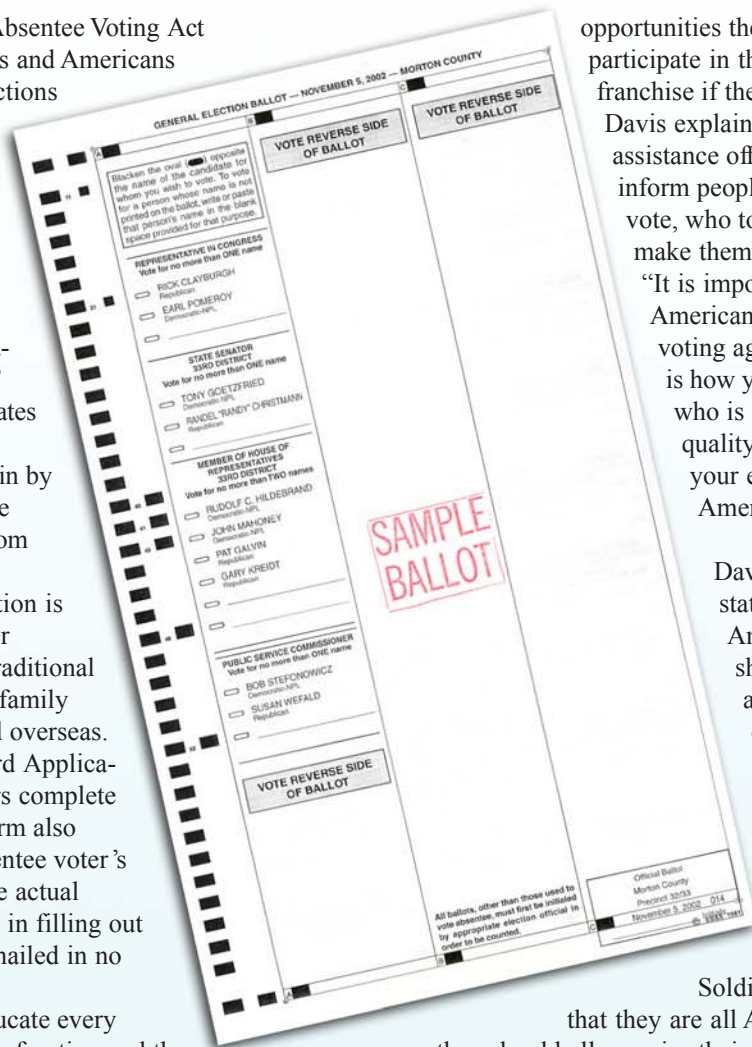
Preston echoed Davis' comments, stating that every American Soldier should learn about the candidates' platforms and exercise his or her right to vote.

"My message to all of the

Soldiers out there is

that they are all Americans and they should all exercise their right to vote,"

the Sergeant Major of the Army said. "Those who are deployed in Iraq are serving as great role models for the Iraqi people as they walk the streets and show the great ethnic diversity in our ranks: different cultures, different ethnic backgrounds and different religions, and how all of us who wear the U.S. Army nametag can live and work together. They are already setting a great example and I would tell them to continue to set that example and vote." (*Army News Service reporter, Andrea Takash, contributed to this story.*)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

visit...

Legal services

<http://www.jagcnet.army.mil>

Political activities and campaigning

AR 600-20

Federal Voting Assistance Program

<http://www.fvap.gov>

Federal Election Commission

<http://www.fec.gov>

This site offers an online Citizen's Guide


<http://www.fec.gov/citizen-guide.html>

http://www.hooah4health.com - Microsoft Internet Explorer


File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites

Address http://www.hooah4health.com Go



60 SECOND REVIEW



HOOAH4Health offers credible source for information

By Sgt. Jimmy Norris

Running the word “health” through your computer’s search engine can turn up a number of interesting results – everything from attempts to sell the casual Web surfer an air filter to conspiracy theories about the medical establishment’s nefarious plans to bury the cure for cancer.

Look hard enough and you might be fortunate enough to find a credible Web site with useful information about health-related issues. If you can stay awake through pages upon pages of stuffy medical jargon, the information might even be helpful.

For those in search of credible health information combined with a truly entertaining and interactive Web experience, there’s really only one place to go.

Hooah4Health, the U.S. Army’s health promotion and wellness Web site, contains numerous articles, quizzes, questionnaires and games aimed at informing Soldiers and their families about health and well-being issues. It can also help them make educated decisions.

Located at <http://www.hooah4health.com/>, Hooah4Health has information and links available which are useful to anyone in the military.

Individual Soldiers can benefit from features on readiness, combat stress and immunizations they need for deployments.

Family members can benefit from the Hooah 4 Families page that features information designed for children, teenagers and parents.

Unit training NCOs may download suggested training plans for the months leading up to the Army Physical Fitness Test or find information pertaining to the Army’s suicide prevention program.

Upon entering the site users are greeted by an audible “Hooah” which can be replayed any time the cursor passes over the word “Hooah” on the main page. From there users have several options from reading articles on physical, mental or spiritual health to reading the latest deployment news.

Hooah4Health also features “Hooah Challenge,” an online course Soldiers can register for through the Army Correspondence Course Program to earn correspondence course credits. The course is designed to educate Soldiers on health-related issues pertaining to the body, mind and spirit.

The site’s interactive features include memory games, mental health questionnaires, a body mass index calculator and more.

Also worth a look are the Hooah 4 Health Media Center and the Stop Tobacco Shop.

The Hooah 4 Health Media Center features video, photos, downloads and other interactive items that highlight the subjects of health and well being. Included on this page is information about financial readiness, healthy eating habits and sexually transmitted diseases.

The Stop Tobacco Shop provides information about the affects of all tobacco use on your health. When opened, each door of the shop exposes a different fact about the effects of tobacco use, nicotine addiction and ways to quit.

Each page has a drop-down menu featuring everything that particular part of the site has to offer that makes navigating relatively painless.

Once you get past the cartoonish graphics you’ll find that Hooah4Health is an informative, interactive, useful and entertaining site that is easy to use and one that you’re sure to bookmark along with your other favorites.

How we rate it

Ease of use:
★★★★

Value to user:
★★★★★

Design quality:
★★★★

Overall rating:
★★★★★
(Scale of 1-5 stars)