

# UP AND DOWN THE HILL

SERVING THE FORT A.P. HILL COMMUNITY



## Lifesavers

*Spc. Tyler Crowder, a combat lifesaver with 1st Battalion, 130th Aviation Regiment, North Carolina National Guard, checks a "patient's" breathing during an exercise held at the Combat Village here. The exercise, based on a real experience, immersed combat lifesavers into an Iraq village where they had to treat and evacuate two downed pilots. The training included moulaged patients and role players who represented different factions in an Iraq village. Read the story on Page 4. (Photo by Mary A. Bodine)*

## Post resident recognized as top area mom

by Mary A. Bodine  
Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs

Fort A.P. Hill resident Bonnie Williams was recognized as one of 20 "Magnificent Moms" in the Richmond area at a private reception at the Children's Museum, Richmond, Va., May 4.

Williams was one of 350 women nominated as a Magnificent Mom, an award that recognizes mothers who are compassionate and inspire others when faced with adversity. The award is sponsored by Bon Secours Richmond Health System in partnership with Style Weekly and the Children's Museum.

Teachers from Bowling Green Primary School nominated Williams, a mother of four, for the award. Despite her ongoing battle with cancer, her husband's deployment to Iraq and the death of her sister, Williams continued to dedicate her time to her children, their school, her community and the family support group for the 276th Engineer Battalion out of Richmond.

In April 2004, Williams began hemorrhaging and consequently miscarried. Her husband Zach, who had recently deployed to Iraq, came home to provide comfort. Once he left, however, Williams received her test results.

"I found out after he went back to Iraq that I had cancer – ovarian, spinal and a brain tumor," she said. "Zach wanted to come home, but I told him to stay (in Iraq). A lot of people didn't understand that, but I felt like there would be more of a fight in

*(See Mother, Page 3)*

**"If everyone is thinking alike, someone isn't thinking."**

-- General George Patton Jr.

# Engineer provides ‘Comfort’ to Iraq

by Mary A. Bodine  
Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs

Sixty-year-old Ken Comfort could have been considering retirement, perhaps imagining a life of ease on a Florida beach; instead, he volunteered for a 12-month tour in Iraq.

Comfort, the director of Fort A.P. Hill’s Plans, Analysis, and Integration office, deployed in August to Iraq in support of the Army Corps of Engineers’ efforts to rebuild or improve infrastructure. He returned to the U.S. March 22 -- four months early -- due to medical reasons.

“Throughout my career, I’ve always heard people talk about being forward deployed and how the experience affected them personally and professionally, and that it was meaningful,” said Comfort, who has worked as an engineer with the Department of the Army for more than 30 years. “Over the last five or six years, I have been looking for meaning, something to stimulate me. And when my children left home, I wanted to get back on the career ladder; this seemed like a great opportunity to do that.”

Comfort began his tour as the chief of Construction Service Branch in Al Basrah in southern Iraq. He worked for a short time in Al Nasiriyah and then finished his tour as the resident engineer in Wasit province, 35 miles south of Baghdad and along the Iran border.

“As resident engineer, I was responsible for all of the construction that the Corps of Engineers was doing in that province,” Comfort said. “We worked on public infrastructure projects like restoring water, power, building or restoring schools, courthouses, fire and police stations, and hospitals and clinics. Our purpose was to provide a better life for the Iraqi people.”

Comfort used an interesting method to befriend Iraqis in order to complete COE projects: Tootsie Roll Pops.

“I always carried a pocket full of Tootsie Roll Pops and gave them away to everyone I met,” he said. “I became known as ‘the crazy bearded American who gives away Tootsie Roll Pops,’ which was what I wanted. It was something simple that could make people smile and made me known as an American who led from the heart. It’s amazing how a little gift can make the beginning of a friendship.”

On one occasion, Comfort took a box of Tootsie Roll Pops for a meeting with hospital administrators at a women and pediatric hospital. With a security force



*Ken Comfort, director of Plans, Analysis and Integration, shows off an headdress given to him by an Iraqi lawyer as a gift. (Photo by Mary A. Bodine.)*

of eight men, Comfort came into the hospital wearing jeans and sunglasses, his beard covering his face.

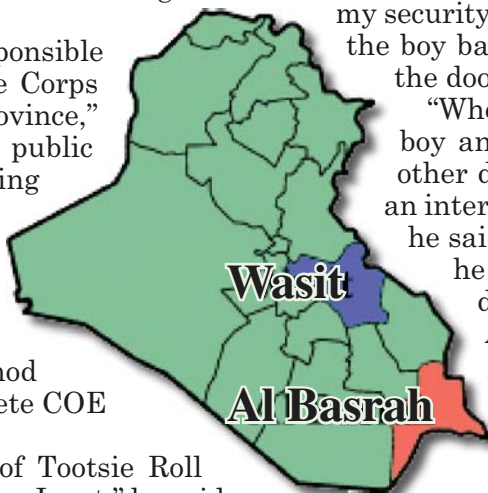
“We scared a fool out of everyone,” Comfort said. “There was one young boy who kept staring at me from across the hall (from the meeting). I’d wave and he’d get shy, so I decided to give him a Tootsie Roll Pop. I walked over to his room, but a member of my security team puts himself right with me, so the boy backs into the room and tries to shut the door.”

“When I was leaving (the hospital), the boy and his mother were coming out the other door, so I asked the mother through an interpreter if I could speak with the boy,” he said. “I kneeled down and asked him if he was afraid of me. Then I said, ‘You don’t have to be afraid of me or any Americans ... When you get big, you study hard and do good things for Iraq and then you will be able to look me in the eye and say ‘Hello, crazy American!’”

Comfort said he left the young boy with a Tootsie Roll Pop and, of course, a smile. The box of candy was left with the hospital administrator for all of the hospital’s “little and big kids,” he added.

Although the infrastructure Iraqis wanted most were water and medical facilities, Comfort said the renovation and repairs of many schools in Wasit province had the biggest political impact.

*(See Comfort, Page 3)*



## Mother (Continued from Page 3)

me – I would have to fight so that I could be here for my family and my husband when he gets home.”

Williams recruited a chaplain to help her tell her kids, ages 4-9, about her cancer and the treatment she would receive.

“I didn’t want to lie to them and say mommy’s going to get better because I don’t want them to hate me for not preparing them,” Williams said. “The real world’s out there and they need to be prepared for the good and the bad. The kids have dealt with this better than I hoped.”

Although Williams said her youngest Caitlin, 4, doesn’t always understand why mommy’s sick, her oldest child Cassandra, 9, often steps in to help out with chores and taking care of her siblings.

Williams is undergoing aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatment and said that her doctor said she will either live no more than three months or she will survive. Her sister died from ovarian and brain cancer in 2004 and chose not to seek treatment; Williams said she wanted to fight her cancer.

In addition to dealing with cancer, Williams’ husband spent more than a year in Iraq. On Dec. 21, his unit’s gym was hit by a mortar. Sgt. Zach Williams sustained serious

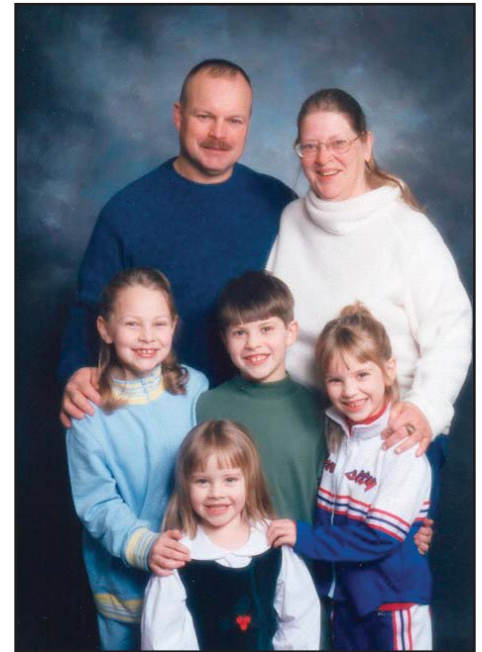
shrapnel injuries. Since returning to the U.S. in March, he has been receiving treatment at a medical facility in Fort Dix, N.J., Williams said.

To support her husband and his unit, Williams joined the family support group and coordinated with several organizations for care-package donations. For example, Soldiers in Williams’ unit did not have bed sheets when they arrived in Iraq. Williams asked Wal-Mart to donate sheets for the unit and the company began sending sheets to Iraq every month; there were so many, the unit passed them on to its replacement, she said.

Williams is also very active at her children’s school.

“I like to help the teachers with different projects like the music program or field trips; I help out in the office or make dinner for the teachers at parent-teacher conferences,” she said. “I also like to have lunch with my kids. When I eat lunch with Cole (8), all of his friends come around; I just like to make them laugh and we have fun together.”

The stress she has endured in dealing with her illness, her husband’s deployment and her sister’s death, has given Williams an opportunity to strengthen her family and herself, she said.



*Bonnie and Sgt. Zach Williams pose with their four children (clockwise from right), Cassandra, 9, Cole, 8, Crystal, 7, and Caitlin, 4. (Courtesy photo)*

“I’m taking this all in as a learning experience. I’ve learned to deal with the pain, depression, anger, but after all that I know that I have the love of my family and that there are still things I want to teach my kids,” Williams said. “I have a lot of energy; I don’t want to give up. If I did, I wouldn’t be able to give them the love they deserve.”

## Comfort (Continued from Page 2)

“Many of the voting areas for the election were held at schools we renovated,” Comfort said. “When Iraqis came to the schools to vote, they saw how we had improved the schools and were very impressed. I think many of them realized we were there to do good things.”

Many Iraqis worked with Comfort on infrastructure projects, he said. Because many Iraqis speak English, Comfort said he was able to discuss, not only construction projects, but religion and politics as well.

“My translator was a MiG pilot under Saddam Hussein; his brother was one too but had been shot down during the Gulf War,” Comfort said. “We discussed politics frequently and I said to him once,

‘I hope you know that the U.S. is not here as an occupier or for oil.’ He said to me, ‘We know because if you were, every man and woman (in Iraq) would rise up against you. We know you are here to bring security, freedom and prosperity.’”

Though he won’t miss wearing his “battle rattle,” being up to his knees in mud, or the talcum-fine sand in his lungs, Comfort said he would not trade the experience “for anything in the world” – especially the people he met and the relationships he made.

“I absolutely loved the experience,” he said. “I am proud that I was able to be a part of the whole construction program and nation-building. It has been a life-changing, life-altering experience, both personally and professionally, for the better.”

# Combat lifesavers test skills under pressure

by Mary A. Bodine

Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs

Less than a year after becoming a medic in the North Carolina National Guard, Spc. Rob Cook found himself in Fallujah, Iraq, in the midst of one of the war's fiercest battles, trying save the life of a Soldier with a gunshot wound.

"It was my first mission in Fallujah: pick up a patient that had a gunshot wound in the chest – but on our way out we were ambushed," Cook said. "So we had to drive back to the village we picked the patient up from. In the middle of it all, there were injured Iraqis that needed medical attention. When the bullets are flying, you have to make a decision: will helping these people benefit the mission, will it endanger my patient?"

Cook's real-life experience in Iraq was the basis for combat lifesaver training at the Fort A.P. Hill combat village April 26. The exercise was part of the 449th Aviation Group and 1st Battalion, 130th Aviation Regiment annual training here.

During the exercise, teams of two combat lifesavers were sent into a village where they were responsible for caring for and recovering two downed pilots. Once in the village, different factions – Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds – try to prohibit the Soldiers from reaching the patients, get them to care for injured villagers, or try to help the CLS' treat the patients. Gun fire echoes through the village, fires burn nearby, and the CLS' must decide if they will treat only Americans, how to react to hostile Iraqis, and how to save their patients' lives in the midst of chaos.

"Ninety percent of (a unit's) medical power on the battlefield are combat lifesavers – they're the first on the scene," Cook said. "There are a lot of goals for this exercise, but the most important is to make them combat ready. This



(Above) Spc. Rob Cook, a medic with 1st Battalion, 130th Aviation Regiment, checks for bleeding on an injured civilian "Iraqi." Cook served as a mentor to combat lifesavers undergoing the situation training. (Left) Role players tried to urge the American combat lifesavers to help injured injured villagers.

training is only a stepping stone though; only consecutive training will get them ready."

Combat lifesavers go through a 40-hour course on basic lifesaving methods like how to stop bleeding, clear airways, give IVs, and treat gunshot wounds. Most CLSs do not work in medical positions. In Cook's unit, nearly one out of four Soldiers are CLSs.

"CLS is a great warrior task," said Capt. David Thompson, battalion flight surgeon, 1st Bn., 130th Avn. Rgt. "Caring for a casualty should be just as important to a clerk or a cook as it is to a medic. For this exercise, we wanted to make the experience feel real by using moulage and role players, but we (didn't) want it to be so fast-paced that they don't get the training value out of it."

After each team rescued the

downed pilots, an after-action review was conducted. CLSs received feedback primarily about how they treated the patients, medical evacuation requests, and treatment of villagers.

"It was a great experience – great training," said Spc. Tyler Crowder, a CLS in 1st Bn., 130th Avn., who was on the first team to go through the training. "With everything going on, it almost felt like a real situation and not just an exercise. Because of that, I was going too fast – I need to slow down. I realized everything I did wrong right when it was over."

By designing the exercise around Cook's own experiences in Iraq, Soldiers gain a greater understanding of the pressure they may find themselves under and the importance of maintaining their lifesaver skills, Thompson said.

## HERITAGE MONTH

## ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICAN

In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two anniversaries: the arrival in the U.S. of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (May 10, 1869). In 1992, Congress expanded the 10-day observance to a month-long celebration. (U.S. Census Bureau)



Fort A.P. Hill hosted a luncheon May 5 at Tucker's Tavern featuring Asian-Pacific foods and displays. (Photos by Mary A. Bodine.)

## FAST FACTS

**276,000** -- The number of Asian-American military veterans

**25,000** -- The number of native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander heritage military veterans

**13.5 million** -- The estimated number of U.S. residents who say they are Asian or Asian in combination with one or more other races; about 5 percent of the U.S. population

**959,603** -- The estimated number of U.S. residents who say they are native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander in combination with one or more other races.

**8.7 million** -- The number of U.S. residents who were born in Asia; about one-fourth of the nations total foreign-born population.



(Above) Displays, provided by Shirley Bland and Wendy White, both of the Directorate of Public Works, gave guests dining at Tucker's Tavern an idea of what some Asian-Pacific cultures are like. (Left) Wendy White, DPW, places a Hawaiian flower lei over installation Commander Lt. Col. James Mis's head.

● CIVILIAN, MILITARY UPDATES

## AROUND THE ARMY

**BRAC 2005:** *Process sets stage for future infrastructure*

by Jim Garamone

*American Forces Press Service*

The 2005 base realignment and closure process will set the stage for the military well into the future, Defense Department officials said May 10.

Officials said this is the best chance the department will have to reset the force to meet the challenges of the 21st century. "We don't know where the next threat will come from, but we know one will come, and we must be ready," said a senior DoD official.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's recommendations for base closure and realignment are due to the nine-member BRAC commission "not later than" May 16.

The BRAC process will allow DoD to "rationalize" its infrastructure to match what planners believe will be the force structure for the future, said Michael W. Wynne, undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, during a Pentagon briefing. The changes, he said, will allow DoD to put in place the infrastructure needed to continue the transformation process.

"We tried to think about how to maximize joint utilization," Wynne said. This will allow the services to better share resources and improve efficiency, he said. It will also allow the services to facilitate joint operations and joint training.

Finally, the process will "convert waste to warfighting," Wynne said, noting that resources now devoted to maintaining capabilities no longer needed take money away "from the tip of the spear."

Philip W. Grone, deputy undersecretary for installations and environment, agreed with Wynne's assessment. In the four previous BRAC rounds - 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 - the department went through 97 major closings, 55 major restructurings

and 235 "minor actions." The net savings through fiscal 2001 was about \$18 billion. The yearly saving since 2001 is \$7.3 billion.

Grone went over the timeline for the process. He said Rumsfeld must present his recommendations to the BRAC Commission no later than May 16. The commission - chaired by former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi - will hold hearings and visit installations through September.

At that point, they will turn their recommendations over to President Bush for his review and approval, Grone said. The list has an "all or nothing" provision. The president must accept or reject the list in total. If he approves, the process moves to Congress.

If the president disagrees with portions of the list, he can return it once to the commission. He may include specific recommendations. The commission can take the list and "change it or not. It's up to them," Grone said, and then return it to the president. If the president still disagrees, the process ends. No president has disapproved a BRAC list.

In Congress, it is still an all-or-nothing effort, Grone explained. Congress can disapprove the list or do nothing, and after 45 days the list becomes law. If all goes

well, DoD can begin implementing the law sometime in December, he said.

There are a couple of changes in the process from previous BRAC rounds. First, the recommendations of joint cross-service groups - looking at common functions across the services - have been part of the process. In the past, joint teams could only advise the services.

Military value is the primary consideration for base closure and realignment, but Congress specifically ordered DoD officials to consider surge capabilities in their deliberations, officials said.

**BRAC Timeline**

- By May 16, 2005, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld will forward the department's recommendations to the BRAC Commission. The announcement is expected at 10:30 a.m., May 13.

- The commission will then forward its report on the recommendations to the president by Sept. 8.

- The president will have until Sept. 23 to accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety.

- If accepted, Congress will have 45 legislative days to reject the recommendations in their entirety or they become binding on the department.

For more information, visit: [www.defenselink.mil/brac](http://www.defenselink.mil/brac).

● WELL BEING ● SAFETY

## HEALTHY LIVING

*Safeguard pets from West Nile Virus*

by Capt. Christina A. Truesdale

*Veterinary Treatment Facility, Fort Huachuca, Ariz.*

West Nile Virus has become a household name. Many pet owners are wondering, could my dog or cat be next?

Initially implicated in an Israeli outbreak in 1951, the first cases of West Nile Virus in the United States were documented in New York in 1999. Since then, it has slowly spread across the U.S.

Carried by wild birds and transmitted by more than 28 mosquito species, its natural life cycle can spill over into animal and human populations by bites from infected mosquitoes.

It can cause mortality in humans, wildlife and domestic animals. Birds in the Corvid family, such as blue jays and crows, are particularly susceptible, although the virus has been identified in more than 138 bird species.

Horses are the most prone to the effects of the virus, resulting in death in about 40 percent of cases. There have also been a few reports of infection in bats, chipmunks, squirrels and rabbits.

Dogs and cats can be infected by the virus, but disease from a WNV infection has never been documented in pets.

This means that even though the virus is circulating in their bodies, they are not becoming sick. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the only cases of WNV isolation from pets were from a dog in Botswana in 1982 and a dead cat in 1999. Currently, there is no vaccine for dogs or cats, and protection against the disease is not necessary. Also, there is no evidence that WNV can be transmitted from animals to people.

Even though pet owners need not worry about their dogs and cats contracting the disease, mosquito control should still be a part of every family's backyard. Eliminate standing water, where mosquitoes breed, and consider planting mosquito-repelling plants around play areas and patios.

Horse owners should be the most concerned. The approved vaccine should be administered yearly in most cases and semi-annually for horses that travel frequently to mosquito-infested areas.

It is important to remember that the vaccine does not provide immediate immunity, so it should be administered at least six weeks before the start of the mosquito season.

Although there is no evidence that WNV can be transmitted from handling live or dead infected birds,

bare-handed contact should be avoided.

Dead birds found on post can be submitted to a Veterinary Treatment Facility packaged in a sealed plastic bag or double bagged. Submission is not mandatory. Birds found off-post will not be accepted. Grossly decayed or partially eaten birds also will not be accepted. Off-post, check with your vet or local health authorities for guidance on reporting.

## Simple steps reduce West Nile Virus risk

by Kevin Faye and 1st Lt. Maria D. Benke

*Fort George G. Meade, Md.*

To protect themselves, their pets and neighborhood birds from West Nile Virus, citizens should look for ways to reduce standing water around the home, which is the mosquito's primary breeding ground.

Source reduction activities can include:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property.
- Empty standing water from used or discarded tires that may have accumulated on your property.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outside.
- Clean clogged roof gutters on an annual basis, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug drains.
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and do not allow water to stagnate in birdbaths. Change water in birdbaths and wading pools on a weekly basis.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used. Be aware that mosquitoes may even breed in the water that collects on swimming pool covers.

For more information about West Nile Virus and how to prevent it, visit the following Web sites: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>; [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm).

# NEWS NOTES

## Pow-Wow revives native culture DPW divisions change names

Native Americans from all over will join the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe to celebrate their 18th Annual American Indian Pow-Wow and Spring Festival May 28-29 on the Upper Mattaponi Tribal Grounds in King William, Va. Grounds open at 10 a.m., May 28, with Grand Entry at noon. On May 29 hours are 1-5 p.m., with Grand Entry at 1 p.m.

The Pow-Wow/Spring Festival will feature Native American dancers, drummers, singers and crafters, pottery and traditional demonstrations, food (including American Indian food) and historic commentary on the traditions of the Native American culture and Virginia Indian people.

The festival is open to the public. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children ages 6-12 years. Children age 6 and younger will be admitted free.

For more information, please visit: [www.uppermattaponi.com](http://www.uppermattaponi.com) or call (540) 894-4451, (804) 363-5136, or (804) 769-3854.

## Legal help available June 14

The next legal assistance services at Fort A.P. Hill will be June 14, at 9 a.m.

Legal services are available for active duty, retired military and their authorized family members of all the services possessing a valid Uniformed Services Identification Card. (Reserve and National Guard personnel must be on active duty.)

Call Debbie Moore, director of Human Resources, at 633-8326 to schedule an appointment.

## Nominate superior employees

Nominations for the 2005 Fort A.P. Hill Civilian Employees of the Year, sponsored by the Federal Women's Program Committee are due July 15. All Fort A.P. Hill civilian employees are eligible for an award in one of three categories, determined by wage system and grade. Employees may nominate other employees.

For more information, call Yvonne Smith at 633-8288, or Christine Coates at 633-8366.

Select divisions of the Directorate of Public Works have changed names in accordance with the standard garrison template:

- Engineering Plans and Services Division is now Engineering Division, IMNE-APH-PWF
- Environmental and Natural Resources Division is now Environmental Division, IMNE-APH-PWE
- Engineering Resources Management Division is now Business Operations and Integration Division, IMNE-APH-PWB

## Day camp entertains, educates



Fort A.P. Hill is hosting a Youth Day Camp 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., June 20-July 15, at Dolly Hill Basement.

Children ages 6-12 will enjoy educational trips and activities like a fishing expedition, Meadowview and Children's Museum field trips, arts and crafts and other educational exercises, as well as outdoor sports and activities, a Kings Dominion field trip and an end of camp pool party.

Day camp fees are based on household income and range from \$266-490 for the camp duration. Each additional child from a household will be discounted 20 percent. This fee includes daily lunch and snacks and the cost of all field trips and arts and crafts supplies.

Parents are invited to attend an open house on June 17 to view the classroom at Dolly Hill Guest House and every Wednesday parent and child can lunch together at Tucker's Tavern.

For more information or to register, call Susan Botkin at 633-8201/8367.

## TSP open season through June

Open season for Thrift Savings Plan contributions continues through June 30.

For more information about TSP, visit: [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov). To change TSP elections, visit: [www.abc.army.mil](http://www.abc.army.mil).

### Winner of 2004 Keith L. Ware Award for Best Newsletter in the Department of the Army

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