

# UP AND DOWN THE HILL

SERVING THE FORT A.P. HILL COMMUNITY

## Dive team prepares to deploy at A.P. Hill

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

The 544th Engineer Team (Dive) out of Fort Eustis, Va., set off its last underwater and surface demolition at Whites Lake here before deploying to Iraq for the second time.

The team set off about 200 pounds of plastic C4 explosives on five obstacles, simulated and real, along the lake's bank to train on one of the unit's many missions – underwater demolition.

The dive team routinely uses Fort A.P. Hill's lakes for demolitions and salvage training and the leased area along the Rappahannock River for swift water diving to simulate the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Kuwait and Iraq, said 1st Lt. Thomas Darrow, platoon leader, 544th Engineer Team (Dive).

"The current isn't as swift as the Tigris or Euphrates, but the visibility – which is extremely low because of the murky waters – is similar to the environment we would have to work in to do demolitions in Iraq," Darrow said.

Fort Eustis dive teams are responsible for the Embrey Dam breach along the Rappahannock River in February 2004, pier rehabilitations in New York, conducting force protection swims along the North Carolina coast, and building security fences in the Rio Grande River along the California, Texas and Mexico



Photos by Mary A. Bodine

*Pfc. Adam Frey, second class diver, 544th Engineer Team (Dive), out of Fort Eustis, Va., rigs detonation cord to a stake at Whites Lake on Fort A.P. Hill. The team conducted underwater demolition on post to prepare for a future deployment and as a requirement for promotion to salvage diver.*

border for the Border Patrol.

"In Iraq and Kuwait, (dive teams) have done missions anywhere from body and equipment recovery to demolitions," Darrow said. "We've also done pier rehabilitations and salvage operations, like salvaging float bridge pontoons. We have a wide range of tasks."

Because of the wide range of dangerous and technical tasks required of a dive team, Army divers undergo a rigorous selection process.

First, prospective divers attend the four-week U.S. Army Engineer

Diver Phase 1 Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Here they become familiar with underwater physics, diving medicine, dive charting, shallow water snorkel diving and surface swimming. The Phase I Course is considered a "pre-screen" course.

"This course was developed to lower the attrition rate out of the Naval Diving and Salvage Center out of Panama City, Fla.," Darrow said. "Only about 10 percent of candidates in the pre-screen course actually make it down to

(See Dive team, Page 2)

**"Once we have a war there is only one thing to do. It must be won. For defeat brings worse things than any that can ever happen in war."**

-- Ernest Miller Hemmingway

# Dive team (Continued from Page 1)

Panama City. Most Soldiers don't realize exactly what being an Army diver entails."

At the Naval Diving and Salvage Center, divers from all military branches are trained in surface-supplied air and scuba diving techniques, underwater repair, underwater demolition, and salvage and search procedures.

"Dive school is one of the hardest schools in the Army," said Sgt. Erich Wagner, second class diver, 544th Eng. Team (Dive). "I wanted to go through it and really test myself."

Wagner was first introduced to the Army dive teams while stationed in Hawaii as a radio and communications security repairer.

"I didn't know about Army divers when I came in (to the Army), but I saw them train a lot in Hawaii," he said. "They looked like a really elite unit, very professional."

Many recruiters, Soldiers and leaders do not know about Army divers, Darrow said. "We have trouble getting troops into the field and, even when they do accept the challenge to become a diver, they don't always make it," he added.

Second class divers like Pvt. 2 Kyle Broughton and Pfc. Adam Frey, who are new to the 544th team, researched available opportunities in the Army before



*(Right) Sgt. Erich Wagner, second class diver, pulls detonation from one of two points. Divers must tape C4 plastic explosives to obstacles underwater and, in murky water like Fort A.P. Hill, do so with limited visibility. (Above) Army divers successfully eliminate a water obstacle.*



joining as an Army diver.

"My recruiter told me almost everyone fails dive school," Frey said. "So I decided that would be the job for me. I like a challenge."

The demolition training at Fort A.P. Hill is one of many requirements Frey, Broughton and Wagner must successfully complete to achieve the rate of salvage diver.

"Underwater demolition is one of the tasks that have to be complete to obtain the rate of salvage diver," Darrow said. "They have to place, prime and detonate underwater demolitions to get a check-off on that task.

They cannot be promoted to (staff sergeant) if they are not qualified salvage divers."

Broughton, who has only been with the unit five months, said it may take years to complete all of the salvage diver tasks.

"You are given a packet to complete for salvage diver," he said. "And, you are encouraged to begin work toward the rate as soon as possible. You really have to seize every opportunity you have to complete the tasks because they aren't available all the time.

(The 544th Eng. Team [Dive] will deploy to Kuwait this fall.)

## FEEDBACK: *What type of events or activities do you enjoy participating in at Fort A.P. Hill?*



"I don't always have time to attend the events but I really like Organizational Day and the Haunted House."

*Cheryl Buzard, admin support officer, DHR*



"I enjoy events like the 'end of the fiscal year celebrations' at Tuckers; hunting and fishing when I have time and I enjoy the Town Hall."

*Ed Thornton, plans and operations officer, DOL*



"I really enjoyed the Boy Scout Jamboree when it was here."

*Leacey Field, administrative clerk, DOIM*



# Volunteers valued for giving time, talent

by **Mary A. Bodine**

*Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs*

Forty-three Fort A.P. Hill employees were recognized for going “above and beyond their assigned duties” at the first Volunteer Recognition luncheon at Dolly Hill Sept. 22.

The luncheon, hosted by Installation Commander James M. Mis and the Directorate of Human Resources, recognized those employees who have volunteered to support installation committees, programs and events.

“Our Fort A.P. Hill volunteers have acted on this grand scale by giving their time and talent in order to change this installation, in some form, for the better,” Mis said during the luncheon. “The acts of volunteerism here are wide and diverse and the audience that they affected is also.”

Volunteerism deeds ranged from acting as Santa

Clause or an elf during the annual Holiday Party to providing entertainment during special events to organizing a postwide event.

All volunteers were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the installation commander and command sergeant major. The group enjoyed a buffet lunch provided by Tucker’s Tavern and cake.

“Today, we thank you for your efforts,” Mis said. “Your actions reflect well on this installation. We are an Army Community of Excellence because we go beyond what we are ‘paid’ to do.”

Mis encouraged the volunteers to “continue to motivate others through that sacrifice of time and talent. It will make us a better installation, a better team, and in the end, a better nation.”

The Volunteer Recognition luncheon will be an annual event on Fort A.P. Hill, said Debbie Moore, director of Human Resources.

# Mica High School classmates reunite

by **Mary A. Bodine**

*Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs*

On the first day of 5th grade, Elsie Curtis and her brother sat on the steps of Mica High School and cried. Having spent the summer playing in the spring behind Liberty Baptist Church and helping out on the family farm, the two were not happy to start school. Finally, Principal C. Melvin Snow came out and said, “I think we can find some candy inside.” Curtis said she and her brother never cried after that.

About 30 former classmates and graduates of Mica High School, now known on Fort A.P. Hill as Heth Schoolhouse, shared similar stories at their annual reunion Sunday. Installation Commander Lt. Col. James M. Mis served as guest speaker of the reunion and detailed how the military uses the land they were raised on to train Warriors of the past and present to defend America’s interests.

“This was your place of education and it still remains a great place of education,” Mis said. “This post

has trained Warriors during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam wars and today, in support of the Global War on Terror. We talk about the Greatest Generation – your generation – and our Soldiers today are cut from the same mold.”

Mica High School was opened in 1919 and closed in 1940 after the government purchased the 76,000 acres that would become Camp A.P. Hill, June 11, 1941. Families were uprooted from their homes and farms, several churches, buildings and homes were demolished and Mica High School served as the post headquarters.

“I was very upset when my family had move,” Curtis said. “I was still in school and I remember saying, ‘Mama, why is the government taking our home?’”

For some students, like Thelma Greenwood, who was in tenth grade at Mica High School when her family had to move off their family farm (where Longstreet Camp now sits) to Bowling Green, Va., Camp A.P. Hill offered job opportunities.

“Right after I graduated high school, I got a job with the Department of Agriculture – there was no War Department yet – and I helped them buy the land for Fort Pickett,” said Thelma Greenwood at the reunion. “Then we went down to Norfolk and started buying up any land the Navy hadn’t. When the government bought the marshy land for the Pentagon, they bought it by square feet rather than by acre. I worked right here on A.P. Hill.”

Reunion coordinator Emmett Farmer, Class of 1940 graduate, thanked Mis for maintaining the Fort A.P. Hill grounds.

“As you come down A.P. Hill Boulevard, the grounds look so nice,” he said. “A.P. Hill has done a good job of keeping up Mica school and allowing us to return to our old schoolhouse.”

Classmates also recognized Mica graduates, the oldest Mica graduate – Mary Farmer, Class of 1929 – and observed a moment of silence for their classmates who died the past year. Although

*(See Classmates, Page 4)*

# Law protects from predatory loans

by Steven Chucala

*Fort Belvoir Staff Judge Advocate's Office*

Almost daily, we are confronted with new methods to lose weight. The latest weight reduction program is achieved by lightening the amount of money in our wallets. I'm referring to the exploding business practice commonly known as "payday loans" that is sweeping Virginia with over \$1 billion dollars of short term loans last year.

Payday loans (also called cash advance loans, check advance loans, post-dated check loans or deferred deposit check loans) are loans to consumers of a few hundred dollars for short periods of time. Payday loans always advertise "fast, easy cash." In exchange for cash today, the borrower writes a check for a larger sum of money (principal plus fees and interest) that the lender can cash in the future. Often, lenders charge fees and interest rates that are more than 360 percent ... almost 25 times higher than a typical credit card rate! Payday loans are very risky for consumers who have no savings, unexpected expenses, or difficulty controlling their personal spending. A borrower who is unable to repay the loan, fees, and interest often will take out a new loan to cover the old one, and the cost of the loans escalates quickly.

The growing number of military personnel getting into debt with enormous losses of money resulted in the enactment of a Virginia law effective July 2005, in an effort to assist the military by prohibiting payday lenders that are declared "off limits" by a post commander from extending loans to service members. Fort Belvoir has not had the problem yet as have other military bases in Virginia. This article serves as a preventive law message to ensure you do not fall victim to what appears to be a quick way to get cash.

The law also gives the following additional protections to military members and their spouses, regardless of which spouse borrows the money.

Payday lenders cannot:

- Garnish military pay
- Take action to collect past-due loans while a service member is deployed
- Contact a service member's chain of command in an

effort to collect on an unpaid loan.

- And must obey repayment agreements negotiated with the help of credit counselors or military legal counsel.

(For a complete list of prohibitions see Section 6.1-459 of the Code of VA)

Since 2002, the Virginia Payday Loan Act requires payday lenders to clearly advertise the cost of their loans using standardized terms. Virginia also requires payday lenders to:

- Lend no more than \$500 to a borrower
- Charge no more than 6 percent interest per year on late payments
- Provide the borrower a written copy of the loan agreement and a clear explanation of the borrower's rights and responsibilities
- Accept early payment for all or part of a loan amount without penalty
- Accept only personal checks from the borrower, dated on or before the day the loan was made, as collateral to ensure repayment
- Provide pamphlets explaining the borrowers' rights and responsibilities

Payday lenders use a variety of methods to confuse and defraud customers in the past. Virginia's law tries to fix that. In Virginia, payday lenders may not:

- Extend multiple loans to a borrower to increase fees the borrower must pay
- Lend money to a borrower via a power of attorney presented by somebody else
- Extend a loan in the form of a check, then charge the borrower a fee to cash the check
- Extend loans to allow borrowers to purchase products from the lender
- Threaten or instigate criminal proceedings if a borrower's check bounces
- Renew, refinance, or extend loans

Payday loans are not the best solution to financial needs. Before getting a payday loan, military personnel and their family members should first consider loans from credit unions or banks, and if confronted with an emergency, from the Army Emergency Relief (AER). Those in need of financial counseling may seek help from their Army Community Service Office.

## Classmates (Continued from Page 3)

he was not a Mica High School student, reunion attendees also observed a moment of silence for Kenneth Clark, former Fort A.P. Hill Directorate of Public Works employee and volunteer post historian, who died this year. Clark

helped coordinate the reunion and would often volunteer his time to escort people to their former homesteads on Fort A.P. Hill.

Reunion attendees also discussed attendance and continuing the reunion. Many of the aging

classmates said the reunion has become a hardship to attend; however, attendees unanimously voted to continue the reunion next year and include their family members who could pass on their history.

● CIVILIAN, MILITARY UPDATES

# AROUND THE ARMY

## Bush urges expanded DoD disaster role

by Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26, 2005 – President Bush today urged Congress to consider whether the Defense Department should play a lead role in coordinating responses to catastrophic events such as Hurricane Katrina.

Responding to a reporter's question while addressing the energy situation on the Gulf Coast, the president confirmed that he was impressed by his weekend visit to U.S. Northern Command and is considering the plausibility of an expanded military role in disaster response.

Such a decision would likely require congressional approval and possible changes in the law, but is worthy of discussion and consideration, Bush said.

"One of the reasons I went out to NORTHCOM was to see the operations there, to look at how well-organized NORTHCOM is (and) to listen to them talk about lessons learned from ... a major storm like Katrina," the president said.

The visit also offered an opportunity "to think about ways for our country to properly respond to a catastrophic event, whether it be a natural catastrophic event or perhaps a terrorist attack," he said.

Bush raised the concept of an expanded DoD role in disaster response during a Sept. 25 Hurricane Rita briefing at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. DoD would naturally assume the leadership role in the case of a terrorist attack, the president said, noting that extensive natural disasters could warrant the same level of response.

"That's going to be a very important consideration for Congress to think about," he said. Today Bush said



U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Mike Arellano

*An Army Soldier sprays down an Army Guardsman in a mobile decontamination station near a levee in New Orleans, La., Sept. 14, after a search and rescue mission.*

he welcomes "a robust discussion about the best way for the federal government ... to rally assets for the good of the people" under extreme circumstances.

He encouraged Congress "to think about a circumstance that requires a lot of planning and a lot of assets immediately on the scene in order to stabilize" the situation. Under one scenario he suggested, DoD would mobilize the necessary federal assets -- most of them military assets -- to stabilize a crisis situation then turn it over to the Department of Homeland Security, Bush said.

"And I think it's very important for us, as we look at the lessons of Katrina, to think about other scenarios that might require a well-planned, significant federal response right off the bat to provide stability," he said.

## *Military veteran records accessible online*

Military veterans may now access their Department of Defense Form 214 online.

The National Personnel Records Center is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files, to include the DD Form 214.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which is available at the online site.

Veterans may access these

documents at: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

The new web-based application was designed to provide quicker service by eliminating the records center's mailroom processing time.

(Information provided by The National Personnel Records Center)



# RECREATION

• TRAVEL • COMMUNITY • SPORTS

## Visitors ‘graze’ Army logistic’s elk herd

by Debra Bingham

Richmond Defense Logistics Agency

Junior rules the field, but few know this lifelong Virginia resident. Junior doesn’t play professional football or belong to a gang, but rather a herd — of elk.

Junior is an 18-year old, 1,100-pound bull elk, who lives at the Defense Supply Center Richmond, on Jefferson Davis Highway. As traffic rushes by less than 200 feet away, Junior and eight other elk graze undisturbed in a 22-acre pasture.

While the jet aircraft displayed

on the military installation’s front lawn match its mission as the aviation supply chain manager for the Defense Logistics Agency, the elk nibbling grass on the side lawn seem a bit out of place.

The Army purchased the land from James Bellwood in 1941, and his elk herd came with the land as part of a “gentleman’s agreement” whereby the Army agreed to maintain the herd on the property. Bellwood, an award-winning agriculturist, brought the original pair of elk to Virginia from his former home in Canada.

Robert Fields knows Junior and

the rest of the herd very well. He’s a supervisor in the roads and grounds department of the center’s Installation Management Office, which is charged with overseeing the elk.

“I’ve been feeding them for 35 years, so if anything happens to them they holler for me,” Fields said.

The “lifelong” Virginian speaks fondly of the elk and is quick to laugh about their antics, including the time Junior got a rubber feed bucket stuck on his antlers. Fields said elk are curious by nature, but

(See *Elk herd*, Page 7)

## OFF Sides

Offsides is open to all employees. Players submit picks for two weeks worth of play (one entry per person, per issue). The person with greatest number of wins during regular season will win a \$50 gift certificate to Applebees. The earlier you begin to play, the greater the chance to win. For information about Offsides, call 633-8120 or e-mail: mary.bodine@us.army.mil.



**Name:** Gaining Ground  
**Picks and Pans:** Out sick ... like Green Bay, Oakland and Arizona.  
**Scorecard:** 22-24



**Name:** Knight Life  
**Picks and Pans:** Pan:  
Unfortunately the Chargers will fall to the Patriots. Pick: The Bucs continue to ride to the Cadillac.  
**Scorecard:** 24-22



**Name:** Hokie Fan  
**Picks and Pans:** Pick: Atlanta is going to pull ahead of Tampa Bay in the NFC South.  
**Scorecard:** 25-21



**Name:** CheeseDead  
**Picks and Pans:** Favre -- the QB with the most wins in the NFL -- may just earn the title as the most losses; Carolina will prevail. Once again, the Steelers choked against New England. During their bye week, Cowher can teach Randle El to catch.  
**Scorecard:** 25-21

Other players: AE, 22-24; JM 25-21; TM, 20-10; TA, 19-11



## Elk herd (Continued from Page 4)

Junior is especially so.

“He was running through the pasture and we had to tranquilize him. It took four of us to pull that bucket off his antlers. It was wedged in so bad it made him look cross-eyed,” Fields said.

Fields said Junior came to the center from Maymont Park in 1988, as part of an exchange program aimed at preventing inbreeding among elk herds. However, that program stopped when chronic wasting disease was discovered in domestic deer herds in Virginia about three years ago.

Field said the DSCR herd is healthy, but until a vaccine is found domestic herds cannot be intermingled.

A veterinarian keeps tabs on the DSCR herd, providing inoculations and ensuring each animal is registered, as required by the state, with an ear tag.

Only male elk grow antlers, and the size of the horns is influenced by genetics, feed and maturity. They shed their antlers around March each year and grow them back in the spring. This year Junior has a 16-point rack of antlers, which sometimes get him into trouble, Fields said.

“One time he got about 50 feet of fabric hooked onto his antlers and he looked like the phantom running down through the pasture,” Fields said.

On another occasion Junior stuck his horns into a barbed wire fence and got tangled up so badly that Fields and his crew had to cut the elk’s antlers off to free him. However, sometimes Junior has the last laugh. Fields’ crew once left an old farm tractor in the field where they were working while they went to lunch.

“We came back and the cab was



Debra Bingham

*Mature bull elk average 800 to 1,100 pounds and stand 5’ to 5’6” at the shoulder. Antler size is determined by genetics, age and food availability. Antlers are shed each year around March and grow back in the spring.*

The elk pasture is on the south side of the post near the community center. If you’re interesting in viewing the herd, go to: [www.dscr.dla.mil/userweb/aboutdscr/Center/directions.htm](http://www.dscr.dla.mil/userweb/aboutdscr/Center/directions.htm), for directions.

torn to pieces. He stuck his horns into everything he could stick them in. He busted the radiator, he busted the tires and I think he tried to drive it. We’ve had a time with him,” Fields said.

The elk graze on grass during the summer months and are fed grain once a day.

Frankie Johnson, a member of the Roads and Grounds crew, said the elk know when it’s time to be fed. He’s been feeding them for 15 years. They wait at the feed barn each morning at 6:30 for his arrival and the females announce his arrival with their screeching calls.

The elk food and veterinary care gets expensive, Fields said, since no government funds go into their upkeep. That money is provided by DSCR employees, primarily through an aluminum can recycling program said Terry

Jameson, a budget analyst at the center.

The elk herd is also popular with visitors, who are surprised to see them lying under the shade trees on a hot afternoon, or hear them “talking” with Junior’s distinctive bugle call and the females’ high-pitch screams. Employees also stop by to check on the latest addition born in June — its gender has not yet been determined.

“Mama don’t let you get that close — not right yet,” Fields said. “It’ll hide in the tall grass. You’ll be standing there looking at it and you won’t see it — that’s how good they hide,” he said.

Despite having a slight case of arthritis in his front leg which causes him to limp when it’s cold, Junior reigns over the five adult females in the herd. However, his two sons may soon challenge his position, Fields said.

“He’s a powerful creature, but he can’t run as fast as those young bucks. Their wild animals and it’s their nature, but it’s a sad thing to see,” Fields said.



# NEWS NOTES

## Luncheon recognizes culture

Fort A.P. Hill will observe Hispanic Heritage Month 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Oct. 5 at lower level of Tucker's Tavern.

Renowned guitarist Charlie Moeser, a professor at the University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University, will speak and perform at the observance. A Columbian static display will be provided by Yolanda Milliken, wife of John Milliken, Military Support Office.

A Hispanic culture-specific meal will be served at Tucker's Tavern for \$6.50.

For more information, call Shirley Bland at 633-8467.

## Fire Prevention event slated



The Fort A.P. Hill Fire and Emergency Services will host the 5th Annual Fire Prevention Week Celebration at the National Guard Armory across from the installation Main Gate, 5-8 p.m., Oct. 12.

Attendees will have an opportunity to meet local and installation firefighters. The celebration will include a vehicle extrication demonstration, fire extinguisher training, fire escape house, medical evacuation helicopter, fire and rescue displays and other live demonstrations.

Families will also be treated to hotdogs, chips and beverages.

For more information, call 633-8780/8267.

## Legal help available Oct. 11

The next legal assistance services at Fort A.P. Hill will be Oct. 11 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.



Mary A. Bodine

*CM1 Michael Valles, lead mechanic, Naval Special Warfare Group Two, Camp Connors, was presented with a certificate and AAFES coupon book by Installation Command Sgt. Maj. Roger Chase, for having the September Yard of the Month. Chase inspects the homes front and backyard before selecting the yard of the month.*

## State Fair tickets available

Virginia State Fair tickets are now available at the Community Activity Center for \$14.75 per ticket -- more than \$5 off regular gate prices. The fair will be open 10 a.m.-9 p.m., daily, Sept. 22-Oct. 2, at the Richmond Raceway Complex.



Some of the activities and events available at this year's fair include: livestock shows; Classic K-9 show; Mad Science demonstrations; sand sculptures, motocross stunts and races; a bike stunt show; racing pigs; demolition derby; lawn mower racing; a technology center; and a daily parade will be conducted.

Complete fair information and daily schedules are available at: [www.statefairva.org](http://www.statefairva.org), or call (800) LUV-FAIR (588-3247) or (804) 569-3200.

Visit the CAC to purchase a discounted State Fair ticket or call 633-8219.

### Winner of the 2004 Keith L. Ware Award for best newsletter in the Department of the Army

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