



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION
Fort Bragg, NC 28310-5000
Phone (910) 432-0661/0662

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**82nd Airborne Division 4th Brigade Combat Team DA Civilians
Support the Paratroopers**

By Spc. David L. Nye
4th BCT, 82nd ABN DIV PAO

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – “I wanted to keep working with Soldiers. The Army did really well by me for 20 years and, I know this sounds cheesy, but this is my way of giving back,” said Jason A. Mang, Safety and Occupational Health Specialist for 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, describing what lead him to become a Department of the Army civilian after his retirement from the Army as a 1st Sgt.

Civilians employed by the Army work hand in hand with Soldiers everyday to help achieve unit missions and provide expertise to commanders.

“I like being around Soldiers,” he said. “For 20 years it was my life, I can relate to them. It’s not as sexy as what I used to do, but there’s that saying, ‘if you can’t be an athlete, be an athletic supporter’.”

Donna K. Nelson, the Fury Brigade’s Family Readiness Support Assistant compared working with Soldiers to working with other civilians.

“I like working with Army guys. There’s not a big difference but we have to work harder. It comes down to a person’s work ethics. I’m from the Midwest though, where we all work hard and I don’t have an issue here.”

Mang, who spent two years as a tactical contractor after retiring from the Army and before becoming a DA civilian, agreed the job demands a certain mindset.

“Being a DA Civilian requires a higher caliber, a higher standard. As a contractor I was my own boss, here I follow the same regs as anyone else.”

The civilians who accept the lifestyle though are a part of the unit they serve.

“Our DA Civilians serve the regiment similar to the way our Soldiers serve and are bonafide members of the team,” said Col. Brian Mennes, commander of 4th BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. “The main difference is that they remain in their positions longer, offering continuity in the special skills area they provide.”

“Our Family Readiness Support Assistant and Safety Officer offer our team exceptional levels of experience in their positions and a very mature outlook,” Mennes continued. “All of them have exceptional life and job experience and we have grown very reliant on their advice.”

“I really enjoy what I do,” said Nelson. “I believe there is a need for my position, especially with the current deployment cycle. I have a

passion to ensure family members are connected with their Soldiers and are well informed.”

“The experience and transition has been nothing but positive,” Mang said. “This position isn’t necessarily a prior service position, but for me it’s an extension of a former life.”

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Editor’s Note:

1. For more information, contact the 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs Office at (910) 432-0661/0662 or (910) 831-3891.