

- Provided Soldier entertainment “For the Soldier, by the Soldier.” From April through October 2008, the U.S. Army Soldier Show performed more than 100 shows at 60 Army garrisons. Additionally, USA Express Band performed for deployed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and other areas.

Grafenwoehr, Wiesbaden and Stuttgart, Germany; and Vicenza, Italy.

2.7 Communities and Marketplace

“We are committed to providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.”

★ Enhance garrison services to mitigate the effects of conflict.

- DeCA and AAFES 10 new Post Exchange projects: 30 Major Projects in calendar year 2007 (Major Projects include main exchanges, shoppettes, a mini-mall, a gas station, food outlets such as Burger King, etc.) The Army has also programmed 11 new commissary projects with a \$160 million investment over the next three years.



- The Army/DeCA offered commissary benefits to members of the National Guard and Reserve living in areas where DeCA does not have brick and mortar commissaries. During 2007, DeCA held on-site sales at 21 Guard and Reserve locations; thus far in 2008, on-site sales at 11 locations have served more than 5,000 customers.

- During National Suicide Prevention Week DeCA partnered with both the DoD-funded Mental Health Self Assessment Program and the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Prevention to highlight the benefits of good mental and physical health especially in the areas that can help prevent instances of suicide. Commissaries gave away magnets and eco-friendly shopping bags and displayed special suicide prevention posters, and posters that promote mental health screenings.

- AAFES associates deployed Mobile Field Exchanges in support of 400 National Guard members battling wildfires in California and Yosemite National Park. Military operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as

domestic emergencies and training exercises, drove the need for this quality of life support to deployed Service members.

- AAFES leveraged a variety of communication avenues in support of Military OneSource, the military’s free information and referral service. AAFES is placing commercials on the BX’s and PX’s in-store television and radio networks, advertising through e-newsletters, catalogs, and the Exchange Online Store, and are also providing content regarding exchange benefits to www.militaryonesource.com.
- AAFES is a major source of employment for members of the Army and Air Force Family; approximately 25% of the more than 43,000 AAFES associates are military Family members. Another 1.1% of associates are military members who work part time in exchanges during their off duty hours.

- Implement the Army Community Covenant
 - Accessible Support for Military Families: Thirty-eight states currently participate in Inter-Service Family Assistance Forums while the Department of Defense works to increase utilization and coordination with high-level state officials and agencies. The purpose is to mobilize every resource through an integrated team to assist military Families with child care, resources for schools, teachers and youth, and to facilitate easy access to information, services, and support.

- Voting Support: more than 30 bills were enacted by states in 2007 to address flexible and expedited processes to aid military-connected voters in deployed areas.
- Conducted Community Covenant signing ceremonies nationwide.
- Launched Army Community Covenant Web site, highlighting national, state, and local “Best Practices.”

- Define, develop and leverage metrics to assess Soldier, Family and civilian readiness and commitment to serve.
 - Charters established for the Soldier Family Readiness Board of Directors and for the Soldier and Family Action Plan.

In October 2007, Army Leadership unveiled the Army Family Covenant. The Covenant communicates the Army’s commitment to provide Soldiers and Families a quality of life commensurate with their service.

SOLDIER FAMILY ACTION PLAN SECTIONS

- 2.1 Family Programs and Services
- 2.2 Health Care
- 2.3 Soldier and Family Housing
- 2.4 Child, Youth and School Services
- 2.5 Education, Careers and Libraries
- 2.6 Recreation, Travel and BOSS
- 2.7 Communities and Marketplace



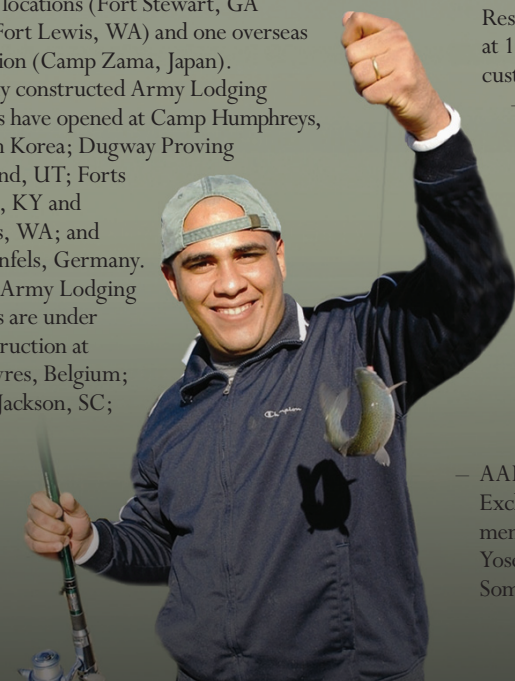
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MAKING
THE
COVENANT
A REALITY

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2.1 Family Programs and Services

"We are committed to improving Family Readiness by standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services."

★ **Established Army OneSource, reinforcing partnerships between Active, National Guard, and Army Reserve support services, local and state community services, and corporate America.**

– Army OneSource provides access to standardized services, programs and support to all Soldiers and their Families regardless of their proximity to a military installation. – Army OneSource, the Army's asset integrator, also provides access to the Army National Guard and Army Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program ensuring Soldiers, Families, and employers have access to necessary information and support before, during, and after a deployment.

– Enhanced the Army Reserve Family Programs' Web site — will include a virtual installation where geographically dispersed Families can access the same support and resources as their Active Duty counterparts. – Mini-Reserve Centers in town and cities across the nation will function like traditional Army Community Service centers found on garrisons.

• Supported 249 enduring Army National Guard Family Assistance Centers to assist Soldiers and Families in accessing support services, regardless of their geographic location. • Increasing staffing and funding to hire 1,029 Family Readiness Support Assistants (FRSAs), down to the deployable battalion level, to provide support to Family Readiness Group Leaders.

• Published FRSA Handbooks to standardize roles and responsibilities. • Secured funds to provide hourly child care for Family Readiness Groups, reducing the burden on the unit fund.

• Increased hours of respite care from 16 to 40 for Families with exceptional Family members.

• Provided approximately \$8 million in exceptional Family member respite care funding. Funds support Families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program with their medical or education needs.

• Provided an additional 13 New Parent Support (NPS) Home Visitors for high risk Families. Home Visitors are now located at 33 locations in the continental United States and 29 locations overseas.

• Created 477 Army Community Service staff positions to meet operational demands and staffing shortfalls — more than 377 of these positions are filled.

• Increased the number of Military Family Life Consultants throughout the Active Army, Reserve and National Guard. Placed an additional 36 Military Family Life Consultants at home and abroad, bringing the total to 154.



• Provided Family Readiness Group resource materials Army-wide.

• Established Soldier Family Assistance Centers for Warriors in Transition in the vicinity of medical facilities to provide: – Administrative and financial assistance. – Assistance with coordinating government entitlements, benefits and services. – Information and assistance in obtaining non-governmental benefits and services. – Donations management.

• Conducted more than 1600 "Strong Bonds" marriage and Family enhancement retreats for 62,000 attendees from all components. Strong Bonds is a chaplain-led, proven program increasing marital satisfaction, enhancing Soldier and Family readiness, and reducing potential for divorce.

• Changed the Joint Federal Travel Regulations to enable the use of appropriated funds for Families to attend Strong Bonds training events.

• Added 33 Family Life Chaplain positions across the Army, Reserve and

National Guard components to deliver effective Family ministry and training throughout the deployment cycle.

• Provided approximately \$35 million in marriage and relationship enhancement program funding across the Total Army.

• Added 21 Unit Ministry Teams (Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant) to the force, primarily at the battalion level to ensure better access to religious support.

• Conducted more than 100,000 religious services around the world, at home station and on the battlefield, supporting Soldiers' and Families' right to the free exercise of their religion and enhancing their readiness and resiliency through relevant connection with their faith practice and community.

2.2 Health Care

"We are committed to improving Family readiness by increasing accessibility and quality of health care."

★ **Adapted health care systems to improve access and quality.**

– Created 35 Warrior Transition Units to support more than 12,000 Soldiers, with the singular focus of warrior healing and support to Army Families. – Hired 191 of 275 new Behavioral Health Providers, adding 16,000 appointments per month. – Increased primary care visits to more than 7 million in fiscal year 2007. – Met access standards for 93% of patient appointments October 2007-May 2008.



– Added 30 new Army Substance Abuse Counselor positions Army-wide.

• Enhanced care for Traumatic Brain Injury/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (TBI/PTSD).

– Provided TBI/PTSD chain teaching to more than 900,000 Soldiers. – Educated more than 400 providers on TBI care and programs. – Validated six TBI programs to ensure high-quality care. – Conducted neurocognitive testing on more than 60,000 Soldiers prior to deployment. – Provided Advanced PTSD Training to 180 Army Mental Health Providers.

• Eased the effects of deployments on children, spouses, and dual-military Families.

– Created 200,000 videos and training products to strengthen resilience in military children and Families (currently in distribution). – Strengthened partnerships with local school districts to support the needs of children with deployed parents. – Expanded Battlemind psychological training to include spouses. – Began development of Battlemind products for children. – Created 32 additional Marriage and Family Therapist positions (hiring underway).

• Reduced the effects of geographic isolation, leveraging community-based resources.

– Nine community-based health care organizations are now serving 1,513 Warriors in Transition residing at home. – Strengthened the partnership with the Veterans' Administration for improved transition for Soldiers leaving the Army. – Implemented enhancements to the TRICARE Reserve Select Program,

authorizing TRICARE Standard coverage for more than 500,000 eligible members of the Selected Reserve and their Family members.

• Augmented Family Life Centers with U.S. Army Reserve chaplains to increase access to supportive Family counseling and education as part of comprehensive counseling initiatives.



• Conducted regular suicide awareness, prevention, and intervention training, both at home station and for deployed Soldiers.

2.3 Soldier and Family Housing

"We are committed to providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive."

• Improved barracks Army-wide. – The Barracks Modernization Program funded \$9.4 billion for permanent party barracks through fiscal year 2007 and is funding \$2.2 billion in fiscal year 2008 for permanent party barracks construction, renovation, and modernization.

– Completion of buyout for the Barracks Modernization Program for permanent party Soldiers will be accomplished by 2013 with full occupancy by 2015. – The Training Barracks Upgrade Program has funded \$1.37 billion to improve training barracks for Active, Guard and Reserve Soldiers through 2007 and will fund \$1.07 billion in Sustainment, Restoration, and Maintenance (SRM) and Military Construction (MILCON) to

construct, renovate, and modernize training barracks in fiscal year 2008.

– Completion of buyout for the Training Barracks Program will be completed by 2015 with full occupancy by 2017.

– SRM funding to support Warrior Transition interim barracks included \$162 million in fiscal year 2007 and \$93 million in fiscal year 2008 to support 41 garrisons worldwide. – Renovated five buildings (on five installations) at a cost of \$36 million through the Barracks Upgrade Program (BUP). Funded renovations on six buildings (on five installations) at a cost of \$62 million for fiscal year 2008. – Renovated 30 barracks projects at 13 installations through the Military Construction process. Funded projects on 31 barracks (23 installations and one Air Force Base) for fiscal year 2008. – Renovated 148 training barracks on 19 installations through the Training Barracks Improvement Program at a cost of \$235 million. Estimated completion date: November 2008.

• Improved on-post housing through the Residential Communities Initiative (RCI). – More than 80,000 homes at 38 installations have been privatized. – Close to 16,000 homes have been built and another 12,000 renovated. – RCI will provide more than 89,000 homes at 45 installations at end state in 2011.



★ **Provided on-post projects for single senior Soldier housing at Forts Irwin, Drum, Bragg, Stewart and Bliss.**

– Five on-post apartment residential communities are approved for single

Soldiers (Staff Sergeant and above, including officers).

– One thousand three hundred ninety-six one bedroom/one bath and two bedroom/two bath apartments will be provided at end state in 2010/2011 (total of 1,804 accommodations/bedrooms).

2.4 Child, Youth & School Services

"We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families."

★ **Expanded deployment cycle support.**

– Extended operating hours for Child, Youth & School (CYS) Services' programs beyond the normal duty day. – Increased respite child care from 5 to 16 hours per child per month.

• Improved school liaison and transition support.

– In 2008 the Interstate Compact on Education opportunities for Military Youth was passed in 11 states which addresses transfer of records, course sequencing, graduation requirements, redundant or missed exit testing, Kindergarten/1st Grade age variation and power of non-deployed custodial parents. Increased school district participation to more than 330 on an agreement to support military-connected students, transferring to new school systems; approved 94% of Families seeking high school senior move stabilization.

• Reduced CYS Program fees. – Eliminated CYS registration fee. – Reduced CYS program fees to ease financial burdens on Families.

• Increased support for Warriors in Transition Families.

– Provided caregivers during medical treatment appointments. – Offered child care fee reductions at the lowest fee category, and waived fees for children of Wounded Warriors to participate in four CYS instructional classes and two CYS individual sports.



• Provided quality programs for children and youth.

– Received 100% Department of Defense Certification (equivalent of state licensing requirements) for all garrison Child and Youth Programs. – Achieved external accreditation for 97% of Child Development Centers and 100% of School Age programs by national professional accrediting agencies.

• Expanded Child and Youth Construction Program.

– Funded 72 FY08 Child Development Center construction projects; programmed 25 additional Centers FY09-14. – Funded 11 new Youth Centers in FY08; programmed 14 additional Youth Centers FY09-14.

• Improved outreach to geographically dispersed youth.

– Expanded community-based outreach services in 42 states to children and youth of deployed Active, National Guard, and Army Reserve Soldiers through Operation: Military Kids. – Distributed 40,000 Hero Packs to the National Guard and Army Reserve youth with deployed parents.

• Provided more than 2,000 religious education opportunities supporting child and youth faith development reaching more than 200,000 Soldiers and Family members.

2.5 Education, Careers and Libraries

"We are committed to improving Family readiness by expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members."

• Thirty-five states are now providing in-state tuition rates to military Families, and continue this benefit after the military sponsor leaves the state.

★ **Enhanced the Army Employment Readiness Program, providing job search assistance, job skills training and information and referral services for Soldiers, Family members and eligible military ID card holders.**

• The National Endowment of the Arts Partnerships for Arts and Humanities for Soldiers and Families

partnered with 30 military communities to bring classic literature, teacher's guides, and reader's guides to more than 2,900 military students.

• Hired more than 7,000 spouses in fiscal year 2007 through the Army Spouse Employment Program (ASEP), a partnership with Fortune 500 companies and government agencies providing employment opportunities to military spouses. More than 23,400 spouses have been hired since the program's inception.

• Updated the Military Spouse Job Search Web site (www.msjs.org), which was launched in July 2005 as a portal for military spouses to post their resumes and a place for ASEP partners and registered military spouse-friendly employers to post their job vacancies.



• The Departments of Defense and Labor launched the Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative which provides spouses up to \$3,000 yearly for education, training, certification and licensing.

• An increasing number of states, colleges, and universities are now offering reduced or free tuition to Soldiers and their Family members at state institutions.

2.6 Recreation, Travel and BOSS

"We are committed to providing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service."

• Expanded recreation programs by adapting/increasing hours of operation, partnering with Child Youth & School (CYS) Services to provide on-site child care and deliver non-facility-based programs to meet the needs of the Army Family.

★ **Provided sports, fitness, recreation, and library services to deployed military personnel. Continuing to deliver competitive athletic events, live entertainment, internet cafés, fitness facilities, and social recreation programs.**

• Created the Wounded Warriors Sports Program, in conjunction with the World Class Athlete Program, providing a goal-oriented sports program for physically disabled Soldiers remaining on active duty. This program provides opportunities for physically disabled Soldiers to remain active and pursue their athletic dreams.

• Identified a requirement for 49 full-time Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) positions across the Army. The BOSS program is designed to be the collective voice for single Soldiers. Garrison BOSS programs are improving leisure and recreation opportunities for Soldiers and conducting community service projects within the local community to improve the quality of life for every member of the military.

• Developed the Warrior Adventure Quest program, providing Soldiers with activities such as rock climbing, mountain biking, white-water rafting, paintball, snowmobiling, and SCUBA diving in a supervised environment which provides a stimulating alternative to self-destructive behaviors.