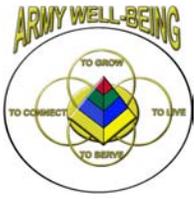


# Your Well-Being Information Resource

## Well-Being Liaison Office (WBLO)



# FLO Notes



**Soldiers on Point for the Nation – Persuasive in Peace, Invincible in War**

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## Chief's Corner

### Military Spouses serve with committed character

Looking ahead to just a few days into May is Military Spouse Day. The actual date is May 7.

The observance of this day came about by proclamation of the President of the United States. The first paragraph of this proclamation signed by President Ronald Reagan reads "Since the early days of the Continental Army, the wives of our servicemen have made unselfish contributions to the spirit and well-being of their fighting men and the general welfare of their communities."

Reagan's proclamation goes on to recognize that the military spouse has "made countless personal sacrifices to support the Armed Forces," and that they "subordinated their personal and professional aspirations to the greater benefit of the service family."

To me these are profound words. However, the sacrifices spouses make are even far more profound.

I hear from time to time phrases that diminish this sacrifice. Phrases such as, "if we had wanted you to have a wife we would have issued you one."

Today we tend to laugh these moments of ignorance off, but to me it is still not funny. The sacrifice is born out of the American family allowing this grand Army of ours to have their loved one for a period of time. This is noble, selfless, and stands at the pinnacle of patriotism.

The military spouse will get my vote for the "Person of the Year" next year, just as they have from me for many years past. It is only just that military spouses be appropriately honored for the greatness they represent, and the commitment they have made, and continue to make, to the Army and their Soldier.

The Well-Being Liaison Office (WBLO) continues to aide in keeping spouses prepared to deal with Army life through this monthly *FLO Notes* newsletter, as well as information and resources on our *Army Families Online* Web site – [www.wblo.org](http://www.wblo.org).

Thanks for what you do!

### Military Spouse Day '04

Military Spouse Day is May 7. The first Military Spouse Day was observed May 23, 1984, when a proclamation signed by President Ronald Reagan recognized the contributions of military spouses to the spirit and Well-Being of our Soldiers and the general welfare of the communities in which they live.

In 1985, Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger established Military Spouse Day as the Friday before Mother's Day.

As volunteers, military spouses have provided invaluable service and leadership in educational, community, recreational, religious, social and cultural endeavors.

Army spouses have always made their own, unique contributions to the Well-Being of the force through numerous wars and all the periods of restless peace in between.

The dedication and support of Army spouses is never more important than

during times of war. The Army family remains strong and vibrant, and for that we owe a tremendous amount to Army spouses who rely on their own remarkable personal courage, indomitable strength and great resolve to sustain Army families.

Please take time on May 7 to pause and use the opportunity to formally recognize Army spouses in your community – for their service, their sacrifice and for unyielding devotion to our Soldiers and our Army.

### NMFA Family Award announced

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is proud to present the first ever NMFA Family Award. The award program was conceived by NMFA in 2003 to highlight the public service of families of uniformed servicemembers who also serve their nation.

The award recognizes military families which exemplify the best aspects of the military lifestyle and demonstrate the NMFA 35th Anniversary theme – Strong Families\* Strong Force!

Through the generosity of Nestle USA, which is sponsoring the NMFA Family Award program, each of the winning families (immediate family members only) will be flown to Washington, DC to be honored during the week of November 15. In addition to visiting Capitol Hill and the Pentagon, the families will be honored at a special celebration, and each winning family will receive a \$1,000 cash award.

Additionally, NMFA will send a

\$500 cash award to the three individuals who submit the winning nomination packets. A complete packet includes a nomination form and a 1000-word essay.

Anyone 12 or older may submit a nomination packet for their own family, or the family of someone they know, who embodies the military lifestyle.

Packet submissions are not limited to military family members, as NMFA encourages all individuals, organizations and agencies to nominate worthy families.

The nomination process should be completed through the NMFA Web site, [www.nmfa.org](http://www.nmfa.org). However, those who do not have access to the Internet may contact NMFA Headquarters and request that a packet be sent via mail.

Nominations must be received at NMFA Headquarters no later than May 20. Winning families will be notified in June.

For more information, contact Donna Clodfelter via e-mail at [familyaward@nmfa.org](mailto:familyaward@nmfa.org), call 1-800-260-0218, or visit Army Families Online at [www.wblo.org/user/anc/anc\\_user\\_display.asp](http://www.wblo.org/user/anc/anc_user_display.asp).

## AAFES unveils 'Serving Troops Downrange'

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) recently launched a new "Serving Troops Downrange" Web site – [www.aafes.com/downrange/home.htm](http://www.aafes.com/downrange/home.htm) – to provide deployed troops and family members with information regarding support available to servicemembers deployed "downrange."

The site was developed to provide servicemembers, commanders and family members with an opportunity to see what kind of exchange facilities are available at downrange locations throughout the areas of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring

Freedom (OIF/OEF). The site also includes important information regarding services and benefits available



to deployed servicemembers and their families.

"We have communities preparing for deployments and the local commands are asking what kind of exchange facilities the troops can expect," said Maj. Gen. Kathryn Frost, AAFES commander. "With this new site, military units and family members can be better informed concerning AAFES support when facing deployment."

The site includes exterior and interior views of contingency facilities with complete information about food and service operations currently available at each forward location. The main page contains two drop-down menus – one lists specific regions and all AAFES sites within, and the other menu offers links to important deployment information such as the best value for calling home, AAFES's Star Card deployment policy and downrange stock assortment.

"One of AAFES's most rewarding missions is serving troops deployed in contingency operations currently in southwest and central Asia," AAFES officials said. AAFES also supports unit-run imprest fund activities operated by servicemembers located at remote locations where AAFES is not allowed to open an exchange.

AAFES operates in a variety of permanent structures, pre-fabricated buildings, trailers, tents and at times on pallets in the sand. In addition, AAFES also supports numerous mobile operations to remote locations in an effort to reach out to as many troops as possible. This allows servicemembers who normally would not have access to a store the opportunity to enjoy a little piece of home.

AAFES contingency operations are staffed and operated by AAFES associates on a volunteer basis. They work long hard hours in austere conditions and are true heroes, serving both the military and the nation.

"I think many people wonder what it's like downrange, and even though this site can only provide a brief glimpse of OIF/OEF PX/BX operations, it offers a good introduction to the support AAFES can supply during deployment," said Marilyn Iverson, chief operating officer, AAFES.

Information concerning this and other AAFES programs, as well as

many other military-related topics may be found in the *Army Families Online* "SmartBook" – [www.wblo.org/user/smb/smb\\_user\\_display.asp](http://www.wblo.org/user/smb/smb_user_display.asp).

## Airline Miles help wounded servicemembers

Thanks to a partnership between Northwest Airlines and the nonprofit Fisher

House Foundation – [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org) – travelers can donate their miles from the airline's WorldPerks frequent-flyer program to help servicemembers wounded or injured on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Northwest is providing travel through the use of donated WorldPerks miles for wounded or injured servicemembers to take leave or pass from military hospitals, and for their families to visit them at their bedside. Jim Weiskopf, Fisher House spokesman, said the Northwest program is the second airline partnership involving the foundation. The first one, with American Airlines, uses donated "AAdvantage Award" certificates donated by Anheuser-Busch employees.

Other programs using donated frequent-flyer miles are restricted to military members coming home from Iraq or Afghanistan on emergency leave, Weiskopf said. Proposed legislation would permit the military to use the services of a nonprofit organization to administer a program for family members, and that would involve all participating airlines.

Best known for its network of comfort homes on the grounds of all the military's major medical centers, Fisher House Foundation has been named a Northwest Airlines designated "AirCares" charity – [www.nwa.com/features/FisherHouse.html](http://www.nwa.com/features/FisherHouse.html). Northwest announced this special program to accept frequent-flyer miles from its customers and allow Fisher House to redeem miles for free airline tickets to



support hospitalized servicemembers.

The AirCares program depends on the support of the airline's WorldPerks member donations. To donate their miles, WorldPerks members can call 1-800-327-2881, with their WorldPerks account and PIN numbers.

Although the Northwest program will continue through Dec. 31, mileage may be donated to the Fisher House Foundation only through Nov. 30. The minimum donation is 5,000 miles, and larger donations may be made in 1,000-mile increments. All AirCares mileage donations are final, officials said, meaning unused miles cannot be restored to members' accounts.

Information concerning similar programs that benefit families of injured Soldiers may be found in the *Army Families Online* "SmartBook" – [www.wblo.org/user/smb/smb\\_user\\_display.asp](http://www.wblo.org/user/smb/smb_user_display.asp) – under Operation Hero Miles.

## Savings plan created for deployed Soldiers

Deployed uniformed servicemembers have the chance to earn a guaranteed 10 percent interest on their savings annually.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) implemented the Savings Deposit Program in August 1990 for servicemembers serving in the Persian Gulf Conflict. This program has changed to include troops assigned to areas of operation outside the United States, and includes Operation Iraqi Freedom servicemembers assigned to a combat zone or in direct support of a combat zone.

"A servicemember can contribute up to \$10,000, but interest of 10 percent will not accrue after that amount," said Roger Castillo, program director for the program. "A member can participate in the program if the member is serving outside the United States or its possessions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and has served at least 30 consecutive days in an area that has been designated as a combat zone or in direct support of a combat



zone. Also, members serving on permanent duty assignment outside the United States or its possessions in support of contingency operations and serving on active duty in the designated area for more than 30 days."

To make a deposit into the fund, troops are asked to contact their finance office. Withdrawing the money before leaving the combat zone is not authorized, unless there is an emergency. The last day to make a deposit into the fund is the date of departure from theater, however, interest will accrue up to 90 days after return from deployment.

DFAS will post the savings deposit balance of active-component members to their Leave and Earnings Statement.

The DFAS provides responsive, professional finance and accounting services to the men and women who defend America. In fiscal year 2003, DFAS paid about 5.9 million people, processed more than 12.3 million invoices from defense contractors, disbursed more than \$416 billion and managed more than \$197.4 billion in military trust funds. For more about DFAS, visit the agency's Web site – [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil).

More information concerning DFAS may be found in the *Army Families Online* "SmartBook."

## New VA site assists OEF/OIF veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently launched a new Web site – [www.vba.va.gov/EFIF](http://www.vba.va.gov/EFIF) – which contains valuable information for servicemembers returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

VA officials said the organization is honored to have the opportunity to provide benefits information and assis-

tance to eligible veterans who fought and served in the nation's armed forces.

The site contains a wide range of benefits offered by the VA for returning veterans. Additionally it contains numerous links to other federal agencies and organizations that offer related benefits and services.

A selection of quick tips in the areas of: Benefits; Transition Assistance; Medical; Active Duty; Dependents and National Guard/reserve, are offered on the site.

Visitors may also send Questions about benefits for veterans of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom via e-mail to [freedom@vba.va.gov](mailto:freedom@vba.va.gov). A selection of toll-free VA telephone numbers is also offered on the site.

The *Army Families Online* "SmartBook" contains many entries of value to returning veterans and their families. Additionally, the Web site will soon feature a new section with information and resources dedicated to disabled Soldiers' issues.

## Commissary Awareness

May is Commissary Awareness Month and is marked by Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) stores worldwide.

The highlight of the month for many customers will be the expansion of the DeCA worldwide case lot sale to May. Shoppers should check DeCA's Web site – [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com) – to find out the dates and times of their favorite commissary's case lot sale.

Commissary news is regularly available in the *Army Families Online* news channel – [www.wblo.org/user/news/nws\\_user\\_display.asp](http://www.wblo.org/user/news/nws_user_display.asp).

## Military Scholarship winners announced

The Scholarships for Military Children program, sponsored by DeCA and the Fisher House Foundation, hit another high this year as the agency reported that more than 7,000 outstanding students applied for the

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\$1,500 college scholarships in February.

Scholarship Managers, a professional scholarship firm, conducted the selection and notification process for the winning students. A complete list of winners is to be available on the program's Web site – [www.militaryscholar.org](http://www.militaryscholar.org) – in early May.

## DoDDS to begin registration

School registration in areas served by Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) is an annual requirement in accordance with DoD regulations in order to determine continued eligibility for school enrollment.

This is also a critical activity for schools since funding and staffing authorizations are based on enrollment and enrollment projections. DoDDS schools across Europe and the Pacific will soon announce plans for school registration for the coming year. School principals will advise community members through newsletters and other communications about enrollment dates, locations, and details.

Parents will be urged to participate in the spring registration drive. Options for personnel who cannot participate will be publicized as well. Community commanders will be contacted by principals and asked to support the drive in many ways.

Schools normally extend invitations to community agencies and private organizations to have a presence at the registration activity to promote their programs as well.

This year, DoDDS-Europe has added an online option for parents to use in completing the annual registration and new registrations – [www.registration.ed.odedodea.edu/](http://www.registration.ed.odedodea.edu/). The online system was developed to enhance efficiency, improve customer service, and make the registration process less bureaucratic.

Officials are publicizing this option to parents, developing a process to accept updates sent online, and making changes for those who choose the option to ensure that customer service and efficiency are enhanced. Parents will, however, have to come to school to sign the completed documents

downloaded by the registration. New kindergarten students or new arrivals may also register online.

For details on local registration drives, contact any DoDDS school principal. Registration updates are also available at the DoDDS-Europe Web site, [www.eu.odedodea.edu/](http://www.eu.odedodea.edu/), and the DoDDS-Pacific Web site, [www.pac.odedodea.edu/](http://www.pac.odedodea.edu/).

More information on DoDEA and DoD schools can be found in the *Army Families Online* "SmartBook."

## National Teacher Appreciation Week

This year National Teacher Appreciation Week is May 2 through 8. The National Parent Teacher Association has encouraged all citizens to show their appreciation to teachers, during this week, since it started the event in 1984.



Observed annually, Teacher Appreciation Week offers citizens the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to parent-teacher partnerships in their community.

Parent Teacher Associations representing schools all across the United States, as well as in the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) will celebrate National PTA Teacher Appreciation Week. Many of these schools will conduct local celebrations and events to honor the dedication of teachers.

Commenting on the national celebration, DoD Dependent Schools-Europe (DoDDS-Europe) Director, Diana J. Ohman said, "It is essential that communities at large give teachers the status, support, and recognition they genuinely deserve. I join parents, community members, commanders, and PTAs in taking this opportunity to say 'thank you' to the many dedicated teachers of our military communities. Their contributions are valued by many and are the foundation of our efforts to educate all children."

Mr. Don Armell, president of the

European Congress of American Parents, Teachers, and Students (ECAPTS) said that the group wants to focus national attention on "the outstanding contributions teachers make to us individually and as a community." He pointed out how experts have concluded that giving teachers the status and recognition they deserve as professionals is one of the best ways to improve education in this country.

"We should take a moment to recognize that we all know of exceptional teachers in our military communities," Armell said.

To learn more about Teacher Appreciation Week, visit the National PTA Web site at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org). Other Web sites that offer information about this celebration include the National Education Association at [www.nea.org/teachday/](http://www.nea.org/teachday/), and Education World at [www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com).

## Well-Being Liaison Office

The WBLO and *Army Families Online* will soon say farewell to one of our valued staff members, as Marilyn Hyde will be joining her husband Sgt. 1st Class Bob Hyde in his retirement from the Army.

For more than a year now, Marilyn has been the literal brains behind the *Army Families Online* "SmartBook." Her contribution to this organization and dedication to Army families will be greatly missed.

While Marilyn will no longer be with us physically, she will always remain with us in spirit as she will continue to be plugged into the Army as the proud parent of two Soldiers – Pfc. Justin Hyde, who is currently serving in the XVIII Airborne Corps Artillery at Fort Bragg, N.C., and Cadet Sarah Hyde, who will be commissioned as a second lieutenant upon her graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., with the Class of 2004.

Best of luck to Marilyn and her family as they continue to serve the Army.

