

Alaska National Guard Family Programs Newsletter



March 2005

Calling Deployed Families

With the increased level of Guard deployments to locations around the world, more families than ever are without their loved ones. As every family of a deployed Soldier or Airman knows, it can get lonely at home. That's why a new mandate from the National Guard Bureau has started the Calling Deployed Families program. This program ensures that the families of deployed military members receive regular check-ups via phone calls. The Volunteer Callers contact their assigned "deployed" families, who live anywhere from Barrow to Ketchikan. Some families receive a weekly call while other, more experienced families of deployment receive calls once every two-to-three weeks. Conversation topics range from friendly social chats about what's happened in life to the needs of the family that could be met by either the Family Assistance Center (FAC) or the serviceman's unit, such as difficulty with TRICARE or other benefits. Families that receive calls feel like they are being remembered and looked after by the Guard while their loved one is away serving his/her country.

With the current high levels of deployment in both the Army and Air Guard, the only way the FAC could meet this mandate is with the help of dedicated Volunteer Callers. Volunteer Callers are always needed! If you are interested, please call Jan Glines at 907-428-6682 for the Army Guard and Gretchen Nealy at 907-249-1130 for Kulis ANGB.

Current volunteer callers include:

Donnamarie Ante	Julie Arthur*
Michelle Aumon	Kathy Barr
Brenda Bartlett*	Judy Blake
Shelia Carrillo*	Amy Carson
Melinda Cooke*	Marge Dittlinger
Sharon Harris*	Louisa Hayes
Jaye Johnson	Kim Lundsford*
Honnen McLeod*	Dena Middleton
Lynn Mitchell*	Gretchen Nealy*
Brooke Scott	Gail Shrader*
Lilly Thomas*	Vicki White*
Becky McCracken*	Marta Mason

*indicates spouse or parent of currently deployed soldier.

The Family Assistance Center would like to thank all volunteer callers for their generous support!

Special points of interest:

- ♦ *American Hero Band*
- ♦ *Air Force Spouses Pin*
- ♦ *Government Benefits Online*
- ♦ *USERRA Rights*
- ♦ *Teen Training*
- ♦ *FAC Training Calendar*
- ♦ *Spotlight on an Alaska National Guard Family*
- ♦ *Letter from the Chaplain*

UPDATE: Bob Shaw is 3rd Battalion's Rear Detachment. His contact number is 907-463-4570!

UPDATE: Ron Braun is 207th Aviation's Rear Detachment. His contact number is 907-428-6651.

Family Programs From Around the State

Family Programs is growing and getting stronger all the time! We recently opened our newest Family Assistance Center located in Juneau, with Laura Gilbert as coordinator. In addition, we have FAC contacts throughout the State. Find the right person or the contact closest to you for all your Army and Air Guard resource and referral needs!

- Ft. Richardson: 907-428-6663
- Kulis: 907-249-1130
- Fairbanks: 907-377-8715
- Juneau: 907-465-1347
- Fort Greely: 907-869-3322
- ESGR: 907-428-6670
- In-State Toll Free Number: 1-888-917-3608

Government Benefits Online

A new website is dedicated to bringing you the latest government benefits that you may be eligible to receive. The website offers lists and information on all state and federal benefit programs currently offered. It also contains information on numerous other federal resources available to the public. However, the best feature of this website is the online questionnaire. This easy-to-use survey

www.govbenefits.gov/
An online questionnaire bringing you closer to the benefits you deserve!

starts with twenty-five basic questions. Depending on your answers, it may present you with additional questions. When completed, this survey will provide

you with a complete list of both state and federal benefit programs to which you may be eligible. The survey is completely anonymous and does not keep any of the information that you enter. You can find the questionnaire by going to the website www.govbenefits.gov and following the link to "Get Results By Questionnaire."

Spouse Pins—Air National Guard

The Air Force has recently expanded the pin program to include the spouse pin. In recognition of the numerous sacrifices they make in support of their spouse's service, civilians and spouses of Airmen can now request a spouse pin. Each pin is accompanied with a personalized letter signed by Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche and Air Force Chief Staff Gen. John P. Jumper. The pin is a blue star cradled in the Air Force symbol. You can register for the pin through the web-

site: www.yourguardiansoffreedom.com
This service is provided through Your Guardians of Freedom, which also provides a parent pin and an employer pin.



American Hero Band—Army National Guard

To show support for all Soldiers now serving in the Army National Guard, the American Hero Band is available FREE on both www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com and www.virtualarmory.com for Soldiers, family members, and the general public. The American Hero Band is a silver-colored wrist band engraved with the words "Honoring an American Hero Serving in the Army National Guard." The band is a great tool for your local Family Readiness Group, for your Recruit Sustainment Program, and to show your support for the Army National Guard.

Online registration for the band takes only minutes, and then six to eight weeks for delivery.

Encourage every Guard member to have their family order one and to wear it with pride. Encourage every Guard family member of a deployed Soldier to order one to wear for their loved one while they are deployed.



Youth News

Hello, Joan Boltz here, the new Youth Coordinator for the Alaska National Guard Family Programs! I joined the team at the Ft. Richardson office at the end of November. Much has been happening with the Youth!

Over two weekends in September, Tanya, Julie Arthur and many WONDERFUL Volunteers provided Youth Reunion and Deployment Training Sessions, with other ENERGETIC VOLUNTEERS providing child care.

In December, I and six youth learned, laughed and yes, cried a little, during a Youth Deployment Briefing. Child Care VOLUNTEERS were once again there for supervision of youngsters, and cannot be applauded enough for their efforts.

I made contact via e-mail with several Youth whose parent or family member is either deploying or already deployed. A few even responded—THANKS!

Looking forward a bit, HEADS-UP TO YOUTH AGES 11 - 15: 4-H and the Alaska National Guard have been awarded a grant for SUMMER CAMP, scheduled to take place 18-22 July 2005 in Wasilla. More details to follow!

**A special thanks to Sean in Nome for offering assistance for this Summer Camp! **

Please feel free to contact me, the Youth Coordinator, to offer up ideas! My numbers are:

Direct line: 907-428-6668

Email: joan.boltz@ak.ngb.army.mil

Spotlight on an Alaska National Guard Family

Each newsletter, the FAC will spotlight a Guard family. This newsletter's spotlight is on **David and Sherry Harmes**. David is a CW2 with Co D, 181 SPT BN, currently deployed to Camp Anaconda near Balad, Iraq. A Guardsmember since 1996, David volunteered for duty in Iraq with a deploying Washington Guard unit and is currently tasked with post security. He's been there since 13 MAR 2004 and doesn't expect to return until May 2005. Their son, SSG Edward Harmes, is also stationed in Iraq; he is married to Michelle, a wonderful person. While only 100 miles apart, David and Eddie have not yet been able to meet up.

With both her husband and son deployed, this leaves Sherry with a quieter home. According to Sherry, the hardest part of having her husband deployed is knowing the dangers that

he faces everyday in Iraq, and not having the small, simple pleasures of daily life to share with David, like cooking meals together.

However, Sherry does keep busy! She is a secretary for the local Coast Guard Auxiliary. When not working, she sends out regular care packages for David and Eddie. She enjoys gardening, doing crafts, feeding the birds, and spending time on Amook Island, where they have a house. Also, Sherry keeps four binders that contain all the email and other information sent home about their deployments.

Sherry also receives support from the Guard. She regularly checks the monthly Raven Newsletter put out by the Washington Guard, and feels that



CW2 David Harmes in Iraq.

the Alaska Guard has been extremely proactive in sending her newsletters, informational emails, and calling to see if she needs anything. Sherry receives regular calls from her Volunteer Caller, Marge Dittlinger, who everyone knows is simply a great lady. Sherry attended her first FAC training when she participated in the Reunion Training held in February at the Anchorage FAC.

The most important things helping Sherry through this deployment include her faith in Jesus Christ, the internet (communication is important!), her neighbors Dean and Cathy Reichert, the support of all her friends and family, and the well wishes of those that don't even know her. The FAC would like to wish both Dave and Eddie a safe return, and best wishes to Sherry and Michelle!

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

(USERRA)

USERRA prohibits discrimination in hiring, retention, promotions, or other benefits of employment against a person because that person "is a member of, applies to be a member of, performs, has performed, applies to perform, or has an obligation to perform services in a uniformed service..." In addition, employers are prohibited from reprisal against anyone who exercises USERRA rights or anyone who assists in the exercise of

For further information on USERRA, contact the Alaska Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) 907-428-6670

those rights by testifying or otherwise participating in an investigation, even if that person has no military connection.

USERRA clearly establishes that reemployment protection does not depend on the timing, frequency, duration or nature of an individual's service. USERRA clarifies that while an individual is performing military service, he or she is deemed to be on a furlough or leave of absence and is entitled to the non-seniority rights accorded other individuals on non military leaves of absence.

2005 Upcoming Trainings—Mark Your Calendar!

The Family Assistance Center is holding the following trainings:

- 29-30 MAR: Trained Crisis Responders (Ft. Greely)
- 16-17 APR: State Family Readiness Workshop
- 18-19 APR: Guard Family Action Plan (GFAP)
- 9-10 MAY: Trained Crisis Responders (Camp Denali)
- 12-13 MAY: ASIST (Kulis)
- 9-10 JUN: ASIST (Ft. Richardson)
- 6-7 JUL: Trained Crisis Responders (Kulis)

Additional trainings are added to the calendar regularly. Please contact the Anchorage FAC for more details, to

sign up, to inquire about different training opportunities, or about holding a training in your area. Guard Family Team Building is available online at www.gftb.org. Also, the Guard Family Action Plan website is now live and can be found at www.gfap.org. The GFAP program is a grass roots process directing actions to improve Family Programs, benefits and entitlements for the National Guard Community. It is a standardized management tool which provides a means of monitoring the process of issue gathering, submission, disbursement, and resolution. Please log on today!

Alaska National Guard
Family Assistance
Center

Located at:
National Guard Armory
Camp Denali - Room D-105
Ft. Richardson, Alaska 99505
Phone: 907-428-6663
Fax: 907-428-6685
Statewide Toll-Fee: 1-888-
917-3608
Email:
Jan.Myers@ak.ngb.army.mil

TO:



A Message from the Chaplain

Chaplain Richard Koch is currently deployed to Iraq. As we await his safe return, we will spotlight a different Chaplain in each newsletter. This newsletter's spotlight is on Chaplain Gilbert Campbell; he is currently Full Time Chaplain Support and can be reached at: (907) 428-6904 or gilbert.campbell@ak.ngb.army.mil

Happy New Years!!

Many practice the ritual of making "News Year's Resolutions" but do not know what to do beyond making vague statements of what they want to do or change. Most of us give up in despair because what we think we want is too big, too hard or is not clarified. In other words, we set ourselves up for failure.

I have some suggestions that could, no, will make you successful. This year when you make your resolutions, set some goals that will work.

1. Start out all your goals with "I will." 'Will' is an action word that commits us to cause change.
2. Create 3 or 4 long range goals (don't over do it) and provide the method to achieve the goals by adding 3 or 4 more specific, short-range goals.

3. Use the following **SAMIC formula**:

Simplistic: Make your goals easy to understand and be specific. For example, if somebody was observing me how could they know if I were working on my goal? What would it look like?

Achievable: Is this something that I realistically can do?

Measurable: Make your goal measurable, i.e., early, monthly, weekly, daily, with a time line (e.g., 15 minutes daily). Keep track of your progress on your calendar or notebook. Did I do it or not?

Immediate: When I do this, will it cause an immediate change?

Commitment: Set goals that you can and 'will' commit to and follow-through with your plan. Tell someone what you plan to do and seek support. Don't give up, especially if you forget. Start it back up and continue where you left off.

Most importantly, remember to include the Lord with your plans: "And Jesus looking upon them saith, with men *it is impossible*, but not with God: **for with God all things are possible.**" (Mark 10:27)