

HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

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Serving the U.S. Army Community in Hawaii | www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/haw.asp

INSIDE

Surge won't change dwell time

C. TODD LOPEZ
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — A 30,000 boots-on-the-ground increase in Afghanistan will not change the Army's plans to cut Stop Loss, stabilize deployment lengths or increase dwell time for Soldiers.

In a message to Army leaders, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. said the impact from the increase "will not be as significant" as Soldiers might think.

The general said that due to the 70,000-Soldier increase the Army has experienced during the last five years, the addition of 30,000 service members in Afghanistan will be able to happen without the Army needing to go to 15-month deployments, without decreasing dwell time at home station below 12 months, and without halting the plan to come off stop loss.

The general also said that if the Iraq

drawdown continues, the Army will move closer to its goals for dwell time — increasing the time troops spend at home between deployments — eventually reaching a 1:2 dwell time for active duty Soldiers, and a 1:4 dwell time for reserve component Soldiers.

"Even with the increase ordered by the president, we estimate that about 70 percent of the active component will reach these goals by 2011," he wrote. "The re-

mainder of the force will continue to see their dwell rate increase and should meet these goals by 2012."

During a speech, Dec. 1, at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., President Barack Obama announced the increase of 30,000 service members to support the 68,000 already in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"It is in our vital national interest to

SEE SURGE, A-8



Signal Bn. goes for the gold

307th Integrated Theater Signal Battalion readies to support joint exercise Cobra Gold

A-6

Live town hall scheduled

Residents urged to call in with questions, issues Dec. 17.

See Community Calendar, B-2



Sgt. Maj. Terry Anderson | 8th Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs

Low crawl

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS — A spur candidate low crawls through the mud at the East Range obstacle course, here, Dec. 2, during the 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment's "Spur Ride." More than 160 Soldiers endured nearly 24 hours of mental and physical tests, in order to earn their silver spurs. Read more about the "Spur Ride" on page A-6.

Experts calm employee pay angst

Information forums help ease concerns over end of COLA, start of locality pay

Story and Photo By
NANCY RASMUSSEN
U.S. Army-Pacific Public Affairs

FORT SHAFTER — Speculation over the conversion from cost-of-living allowances (COLA) to locality pay for federal employees in Hawaii, Alaska and the Territories was quieted a bit as a result of town hall style forums held, here, at Richardson Theatre, Dec. 1 and 2.

The Fort Shafter meetings were just two of more than a dozen being conducted around the region this month to help federal employees understand the implications of the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of which the Non-Foreign Area Retirement Equity Assurance Act, dealing with locality pay, is an integral part.

Two major takeaways from the discussions revealed that employee take-home pay will be relatively unchanged. Unlike COLA payments, locality pay is part of basic pay for retirement, life insurance and government contributions to employee Thrift Savings Plans.

Following the introduction of forum host Brig. Gen. John Y. H. Ma, deputy commander, Army Reserve, by Patsy



For more information about NDAA and Non-Foreign COLA, visit www.honolulu-pacific.feb.gov/.

Uyehara, Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board (FEB) executive director, the hour-long sessions provided much-anticipated clarification about the Act's Jan. 1 implementation.

Members of U.S. Senator Daniel Kahikina Akaka's staff, along with representatives of both the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the FEB focused on plan high points.

Lisa Powell, Akaka's Federal Work-

SEE COLA, A-8

U.S., Japan kicks off Yama Sakura

U.S. ARMY-PACIFIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS
News Release

CAMP ZAMA, Japan — In the first training deployment for the Japan-based I Corps Forward, U.S. Army-Pacific (USARPAC) and Japan's Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) will conduct Yama Sakura 57 (YS57), a joint command post exercise (CPX) at Camp Higashi-Chitose, on the island of Hokkaido, Japan, Dec. 7-14.

Yama Sakura, which means "Mountain Cherry Blossom," is an annual, full-spectrum, combined CPX with U.S. and Japanese military forces working to strengthen Japan's self defense operations.

This year, USARPAC's Contingency Command Post (CCP) and I Corps Forward form the central command and control element for U.S. forces.

The annual exercise rotates among each of JGSDF's five regional armies.



Staff Sgt. Crista Yazzie | U.S. Army-Pacific Public Affairs

This year, the Northern Army will participate.

A joint exercise for the United States,

Left — 1st Lt. Michael Ferry, 35th Combat Service Support Battalion, briefs new arrivals before the start of Yama Sakura 57.

too, Yama Sakura combines U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps elements, including Reservists and National Guard forces. Roughly 1,500 U.S. military personnel and 3,500 JGSDF personnel will participate.

Training objectives include exchanging ideas, military experience and techniques with JGSDF; training U.S. ground forces for deployment to Japan; strengthening JGSDF and U.S. capabilities defending Japan; and preparing USARPAC forces for combined, multinational and joint operations.

The opening ceremony and bilateral press conference was conducted by Lt. Gen. Takeshi Sakai, Northern Army commander, and Lt. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, USARPAC commander, Dec. 7.



Holiday Funfest

AMR celebrates start of holiday season with parades, performances and crafts.

B-1

Bikers bring Santa to town

Bike ride benefits Marine Corps' annual 'Toys for Tots' toy drive

B-3

Limited H1N1 vaccine issued for active duty

At-risk groups, health care workers to receive vaccine ahead of Soldiers

TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
News Release

HONOLULU — The Department of Defense's Military Vaccine Agency (MIL-VAX) recently provided Hawaii military medical commands with about 5,000 doses of the H1N1 vaccine for active duty personnel in Hawaii. Vaccination at

RELATED STORY

• See article on ways to stay healthy during flu season on B-4.

SEE H1N1, A-8

Motorcycle training back on island for round two

INSTALLATION SAFETY OFFICE
News Release

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS — U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii will again host instructors from the California Superbike School for the advanced motorcycle course "Train as you Ride."

The half-day training will be held Dec. 16 and 17 at the south aircraft parking ramp, accessible from Latchum Road, on Wheeler Army Airfield.

"The focus of the course will be cornering technique and throttle control in turns" said Dylan Code, California Superbike School instructor and team leader. "Every lap around the circuit will give the rider an opportunity to perfect their technique, and my team will be observing and coaching them to provide a safe learning environment."

Since 1980 the California Superbike School has trained more than 100,000 street riders and 15 Superbike champions at training sessions around the world, and the school has been on contract with U.S. Marine Corps sites during the past two years.

"This will be our second training session on Wheeler, and we're looking forward to working with 120 riders over the four sessions," said Code.

"Our emphasis will be to 'Train as you Ride,'" said Sammy Houseberg, director of Installation Safety Office. "Our current courses teach many of the fundamentals, but are limited to the capabilities of our certified training area, which is just 220 by 120 feet."

SEE BIKE, A-7

This issue

Footsteps in Faith **A-2**

Deployed Forces **A-3**

News Briefs **A-4**

FMWR **B-2**

Sports & Fitness **B-5**



Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard employee Arnold Ching queries Office of Personnel Management's Chuck Grimes, during the town hall at Fort Shafter's Richardson Theatre, Dec. 2.

We want to hear from you...

The Hawaii Army Weekly welcomes articles from Army organizations, announcements from the general public about community events of interest to the military community, and letters and commentaries.

If you have newsworthy ideas or stories you'd like to write, coordinate with the managing editor at 656-3155, or e-mail editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.

The editorial deadline for articles and announcements is the Friday prior to Friday publications. Prior coordination is mandatory.

Articles must be text or Word files with complete information, no abbreviations; accompanying photographs must be digital, high resolution, jpeg files with full captions and bylines.

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Nondelivery or distribution

problems in Army Hawaii

Family Housing areas? If so,

call 656-3155 or 656-3156.

Number represents fatal

accidents as defined by Army

Regulation 385-10, which is

inclusive of all active component

U.S. Army units and personnel.

Current as of 12/9/09.

Defender 6

Installation funding levels are on the decline

Resourcing Army's home front brings reductions in availability of services

WASHINGTON — In recent years, the Army and its installations have enjoyed unprecedented levels of funding.

In fiscal year 2008, the Army hit a high water mark in its fiscal history with a total annual budget exceeding \$250 billion — three times more than the fiscal year 2001 funding level.

Much of this growth is attributed to funding the war and rebalancing our Army through investments in the Army's force structure, equipment, infrastructure and key Soldier and family programs.

Funding levels of this magnitude are unsustainable year after year, and as the country faces some stiff economic challenges, we are forced to reduce funding and exact a greater level of stewardship over our resources.

The Installation Management Command (IMCOM), like other commands throughout our Army, will operate at reduced funding levels. This means that starting in 2010, performance levels for some installation services will be notably less than what we have had in recent years and will remain at that level for

“We have grown accustomed to some very high levels of service across the board in recent years, and we all need to be forthcoming with the expectation that things will be different in some areas.”

— Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch
Defender 6



the foreseeable future.

Our challenge is to ensure those key, higher priority programs across our installations do not suffer. We will maintain our full support to life, health and safety programs; the Army Family Covenant; and those services that prepare our Soldier and their families for deployment in support of the Army's Force Generation model.

These are nonnegotiables that will remain fully funded. This is our commitment; we will not depart from it. However, there will be other installation services that will clearly be reduced.

We have grown accustomed to some very high levels of service across the board in recent years, and we all need to be

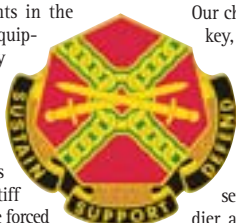
forthcoming with the expectation that things will be different in some areas.

Help manage this expectation across your garrisons. Educate everyone as to which changes they can expect to see.

A simple explanation can go a long way to helping understand the changes some of our installation services will undergo.

Across the Army's installations, we can do much to help ourselves by becoming better stewards of our resources. It starts with the individual; everybody has a role.

Simple things like turning the lights off, powering down your computer at night, driving tactical vehicles instead of transportation motor pool (TMP) vehicles or conducting a video teleconference (VTC) instead of traveling to a distant site unnecessarily all save money — and no savings is too small to forego.



7 STEPS in FAITH

Remember real reason for the holiday season

CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) DAMON P. ONELLION

Family Life Chaplain

Oahu North Community

Over the years of my career my family has lived in locations spanning almost half the globe. We have found ourselves in locations as varied as a Canadian mountain cabin, the Eastern coast of Spain, the banks of the Tigris River, south central Missouri, or the Kilauea Volcano, to name just a few. The changes in geography, weather, and local celebrations as well as the absence of extended family most years have encouraged my wife and I to work all the harder at establishing traditions to share with our children.

One of my favorite traditions concerns our tree. When I was a very small child, my parents had a box of blue glass balls. These were the first “real” ornaments my parents let me put on the tree, and this was my job each year. When my wife and I set up our own household 25 years ago, my parents gave me those blue balls so I could continue the ritual in my own home. Even before I was married, some of the balls had broken, and over the years all of them have had the paint crack and start to peel, but those balls still go on our tree every year. That is one of the acts that connects me to home no matter where in the world I find myself at the holiday season.

They say that “absence makes the heart grow fonder.” I am sure that nowhere is this statement more true than during the holidays. As I listen to my children recite again their ever growing wish list, as I try to prepare for special events while helping my wife with our children's school work and continue to support the Soldiers and their families deploying and redeploying, I am reminded that many of the “special events” of my own childhood were frantic and conflict-laden.

Not all family traditions were something to be anticipated.

I recently practiced another of my fondly remembered traditions—viewing “A Charlie Brown Christmas.” In the story, Charlie Brown is depressed because he just doesn't get Christmas. No one sent him a card. It seems that everyone is only concerned about the presents they want to receive. He asks Lucy for advice and she ropes him into the Christmas play as the director, but no one including her will give him any respect. Charlie Brown asks again what the meaning of Christmas is. Linus steps forward and recites the Christmas story as found in Luke 2:8-14.

Even after this revelation, Charlie Brown decides what is needed is a Christmas tree. Lucy and the others tell him to bring back “a big beautiful aluminum tree.” He finds the only live tree left in the yard, but it isn't much of a tree. Everyone laughs at him and he leaves and tries to decorate the tree. The first bulb he tries to put on is too heavy and bends the tree to the ground. He is sure that he has killed it.

However, Linus again saves the day. He tells the other children that all the tree needs is “a little love.” After they all decorate the tree it looks pretty good and they all sing “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing.” The story ends with everyone finally wishing Charlie Brown a “Merry Christmas.”

If we are not careful, the holidays can be kind of like that for us. If we get caught up in all the hustle and bustle of shopping and decorating and planning the special events, we can leave Christ out of Christmas. If this happens there will not be much left and we might feel kind of like Charlie Brown. But if we remember that God gave us the greatest Christmas gift when he showed us “a little love” by sending his Son for us then we can experience the true meaning of the season.



Onellion

Holidays perfect time for caring, sharing with others

LT. COL. RICHARD GLEDHILL

Commander, U.S. Army Garrison-Oahu

The holidays are a time for festive celebrations with friends and families to give thanks and reflect on the many blessings that have touched each of our lives this year. We are fortunate to be a part of a Army Family stationed in Hawaii enjoying the many opportunities to shop at our Army Air Force Exchanges Services (AAFES) facilities, participate in holiday parties, partake in holiday dining and fabulous desserts at our outstanding restaurants, and after the holiday celebrations, head for our fitness centers to work off the extra pounds.

The holidays are also a time for some families with loved ones in training or deployed. For these single moms and dads pulling double duty while their Soldier is training or fighting, we hold a special place for you in the Army family. As we plan our holiday activities, let us remember these families and their loved ones on deployment. Be aware of those families, and lend a helping hand. Adopt the motto, “neighbors helping neighbors” and share shopping excursions, tree lighting activities, holiday meals and other family outings.

For the many single Soldiers who may be away from home and loved ones for the first time, the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program organizes and conducts

activities and outdoor recreation for single Soldiers under the leadership of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR). For details, call 655-1130.

Or, become a volunteer with the Soldier Volunteer program performing on-post or off-post agency work and receive immediate gratification for your contributions. Additional information on these volunteer programs is available by calling 655-4227.

For spiritual support, call 656-3272 to speak with a caring chaplain.

Engaged leadership is key to preventing accidents, and I believe most accidents are predictable and preventable when engaged leaders, coach, and mentor their Soldiers. In turn, these Soldiers apply these to family members.

Each one of us holds ultimate responsibility for our personal safety. We all must demonstrate self-discipline in all that we do during the holidays.

While celebrating with loved ones during this season of hope and joy, let's not forget that we are a nation at war and not tarnish the celebration with complacency. By staying vigilant and reducing risks in our activities, we will remain accident free during these holidays.

Thank you for all that you do every day for the Soldier and families. I wish each of you and your family a very safe and enjoyable holiday season. Happy Holidays!



Gledhill



2nd Louie

By Bob Rosenburgh

Voices of Ohana

How do you stay sane or stress-free during the holiday season?



“I stay away from the malls and shop online. I stay home watching movies with my mom, Edith, and my 9-year-old daughter, Mikaya.”

Sgt. 1st Class
Nayarette Collazo
Information System
Staff NCO, USARPAC



“I try to spend as much time with my family as I can, because they're the ones who make me happy.”

Thomas Cox
IT Specialist
Alpha Co., 98th
Expeditionary Signal
Battalion



“I spend quality time with family and friends.”

Sgt. Eseta
Faoa
Supply Sergeant,
Alpha Co., 98th
Expeditionary
Signal Battalion



“I don't think about it and just go with the flow. I let my wife do all the stressing and the shopping!”

Jaybee
Obusan
Deputy G1,
311th Signal
Command



“I try to plan and budget for gifts ahead of time, which reduces my stress.”

Sgt. Nathalie
Soler
Human Resources
Reserve NCO
G1 Section, 311th
Signal Command

Partnerships key to 2-16th CAV construction projects



Story and Photo by
SGT. 1ST CLASS TYRONE C. MARSHALL JR.
 Task Force Wings Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq – Many ongoing construction projects are underway across the country as U.S. forces support the re-establishment of infrastructure for the people of Iraq.

Many times, partnership is the key to these projects reaching completion.

Headquarters and Headquarters Troop (HHT), 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Wings' partnership with multiple units and agencies at Forward Operating Base Warrior, near Kirkuk, Iraq, is a microcosm of that necessary union.

Capt. James Pascoe, commander, HHT, 2-6th Cav. Regt., and 1st Sgt. Drew Berry, troop first sergeant, have undertaken a mission to help improve the Lightning Horse Squadron's readiness, living conditions and overall efficiency with an ambitious, large-scale construction project.

"We are spending \$1.2 million to build 57 new containerized housing units and approximately \$550,000 on force protection for our Black Hawk pads and \$450,000 on clean water and electrical systems," said Pascoe, who also serves as the contracting office representative (COR). "The total is between \$2.5 and \$3 million."

The COR also shared a pleasant secondary effect of dealing with Iraqi contractors and agencies as they worked the contracting aspect of projects.

"We are hoping to train the Iraqi business community on how to provide a quality product," he said. "We are not only partnered with Iraqi military forces, we're partnered with Iraqi civilian contractors so that they can support both the military and civilian infrastructure."



Capt. James Pascoe, right, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Wings, explains the concept of a black water and fresh water pit at Forward Operating Base Warrior, near Kirkuk, Iraq, Nov. 15. The pit is part of an ongoing life support construction project totaling between \$2.5 to \$3 million for the squadron's troopers.

"I think this is the most important thing that they can learn from us ... that it really is all about your Soldiers and Soldier readiness," Berry said.

These upgrades will improve quality of life and working conditions for the 400-plus strong Lightning Horse Squadron, Berry added.

"Soldiers won't be wasting their time," he said. "They're going to be able to get up, go get some-

thing to eat, and then go to work," Berry said. "They won't have to go very far for a change, and they'll have a little bit more time to themselves instead of spending an hour riding the bus every day to get to and from work. We're just improving the quality of life for our Soldiers and their ability to do their best."

The partnership is not only with Iraqi busi-

nesses and contractors.

"We are also very closely partnered with the Air Force civil engineers (CE)," Pascoe said. "The Air Force CE has agreed to assist us in constructing parking pads for the medevac to support ongoing operations."

Pascoe added, "About 70 percent of the actual work we get done involves someone in a blue suit."

The units also work closely with Readiness Management Support; 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division; and the Joint Contracting Center.

With so many moving parts, the challenges are plentiful.

"(Challenge number one is) getting the Army to approve the projects that the Soldiers need. Challenge number two is getting the Iraqi contractor to provide a product that meets the specifications you should have at the end," Pascoe said. "Then, after the government accepts it, KBR has to assume responsibility of it before a Soldier can move in."

Despite abundant obstacles, red tape and hurdles, the benefits of reaching the end state are worth the efforts.

"If there are pilots that are well rested and able to focus on their mission, (then I am satisfied)," Pascoe said. "(If there are) maintainers that are able to maintain their aircraft and are well rested and not making mistakes due to fatigue, then I will feel that we've done our job."

"It has been satisfying to watch the Iraqi contractors grasp the importance of improving the standards of quality that they provide," Pascoe added.

"I feel great that we're getting the Soldiers the housing they need and deserve," Berry said.

Lightning Horse 'DART' hits the bulls-eye, excels at recovering downed assets

SGT. 1ST CLASS TYRONE C. MARSHALL JR.
 Task Force Wings Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq – One of the most emotionally driven events a Soldier can experience is the call to respond to a downed aircraft, especially during deployment in a combat zone.

The Soldiers of D Troop, 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Wings, based, here, face that potential reality, every day.

Troopers who serve as the Lightning Horse Squadron's Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) are primarily responsible for recovering the unit's downed air assets.

"We are here to provide the squadron with the combat power it needs to complete its tactical mission," said Capt. Jason Noble, test pilot and commander, D

Troop, 2-6th Cav. Regt.

The troopers on the DART are from just about any relevant aviation military occupational specialty (MOS) that will support an aircraft, such as power-train mechanics, technical inspectors, armament, and aircraft crew chiefs.

Functioning as a cohesive team, these Soldiers quickly bring downed aircraft home and get them back into the fight. Many on the team enjoy their work, but are cognizant of its significance, having already responded to two real-world downed aircraft missions.

"It's fun, but stressful at the same time (so we work really hard not to miss anything)," said Staff Sgt. Steven Weeks, a technical inspector for the team.

Sgt. Kelly Cobb, an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter maintainer, agreed, marveling at how much he has learned since join-

ing the Army.

"For me, doing my job everyday has been (great because) I've learned something new. I came in the Army barely knowing how to change the tire on a car. Now I do everything from changing transmissions on helicopters to recovering downed aircraft," Cobb said.

Even with the extensive training the team conducted in preparation for its mission, including two rotations to the National Training Center and four to Pohakuloa Training Area, on the Big Island of Hawaii, still plenty needed to be learned.

In addition to their area of responsibility, the troopers learned terms such as "fallen angel" and "lame duck," used to describe different scenarios of downed aircraft, according to Spc. Joseph Fearon

Jr., also an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter maintainer.

Luckily, the team doesn't have to go at it alone.

"If we do a DART (mission), the 15th (Brigade Support Battalion) and the owning ground unit for whatever battle space that DART (mission) is in, will immediately (re-prioritize) their missions (making the DART their top priority)," Noble said.

Assisting units, Noble continued, include the 1st Squadron, 230th Air Cavalry Squadron, 209th Aviation Support Battalion, the Iraqi air force, and the State Department's aviation team, which provides additional logistical support.

During a recent activation, a drill, unbeknownst to the team, they quickly gathered their gear and necessary

items for a mission. The team's goal is to be ready to respond to an event in no more than one hour. After demonstrating their efficiency, the team discovered the activation was a readiness drill. The drill was deemed successful with the proud troopers ready in 42 minutes, nine seconds.

"There's always room for improvement, but we have really experienced people here to back us up and teach us ... the people on their first deployment like me," said Pfc. Janine Clymo, a power train mechanic for the DART. "They make it really easy, and it runs a lot smoother when you have people to guide you in the right direction."

"This was probably the best practice DART we've had so far," Clymo added, "and I anticipate them getting better."

News Briefs

Send news announcements for Soldiers and civilian employees to community@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.

11 / Today

HECO Gate Closure – The HECO Gate, which is located near Wheeler Middle School and exits onto Kunia Road, is closed until further notice. Open during peak traffic hours to assist with traffic flow, the gate's use is not needed during the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade's deployment. Call 656-6751.

ASAP Brief – The Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) will hold a presentation on drinking and driving, today, 10-11:30 a.m., at the Sgt. Smith Theater, Schofield Barracks.

This workshop satisfies two of the four hours of a unit's annual alcohol and drug awareness training and the Department of the Army civilian two-hour requirement. Soldiers can call Tracy Powell at 655-8322, and civilians can call Catherine Heflin at 656-8322, for more details.

14 / Monday

Fort Shafter Construction – Construction on Funston Road, Fort Shafter, Dec. 14-Jan. 1, 2010, will cause changes in traffic flow affecting military personnel and visitors.

All inbound and outbound lanes at Buckner Gate will be redirected through the Military Police (MP) Station parking lot. All visitors and trucks will be redirected through Patton Gate, located 100 feet from Buckner Gate, which will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Hours for other gates remain unchanged and can be viewed online at www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/sites/traffic/gatehours.asp.

Motorists are asked to set aside additional travel time in light of expected traffic congestion during construction. Call 656-6751/6750 for more details.

Open Season – The annual benefits open season runs through Dec. 14. During this period, employees have the opportunity to make elections or changes in three benefits programs: Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs).

Resources are available at www.opm.gov or www.abc.army.mil.

15 / Tuesday

Asymmetric Warfare Recruiting – The Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG) recruiting team will hold recruiting sessions Dec. 15, 16 and 17, at 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., at Building 690, the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion, Schofield Barracks.

The AWG presents new career opportunities for officers and senior noncommissioned officers in a variety of fields.

To see if you qualify and learn more about the AWG, attend one of the briefings or visit www.awg.us.army.mil.

CFC 2009 Extended – The 2009 Hawaii-Pacific Area Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) has been extended through Dec. 15. The CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, which raises millions of dollars to support non-profit organizations throughout the world. Visit www.cfc-hawaii.org, or contact your unit representative to learn more.

17 / Thursday

Motorcycle Training – U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii and the California Superbike School will host four sessions of the advanced motorcycle course "Train as you Ride" for military personnel only.

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, A-9

Exercise reunites Soldier with family in Japan

Story and Photo by
STAFF SGT. CRISTA YAZZIE
U.S. Army-Pacific Public Affairs

CAMP CHITOSE, Japan – One U.S. Army-Pacific captain crossed boundaries of oceans and generations during Exercise Yama Sakura 57 when he walked into his uncle Masato Okudara's apartment in Tomokomai, Japan.

While on official orders to the island of Hokkaido, Japan, for Yama Sakura 57, an annual bilateral exercise between the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) and the U.S. Army, Hawaii-born Capt. Ryan Mento visited his family that live on the island and learned stories of his veteran heritage.

"It is a dream come true to be here," Mento said. "It's hard to believe that through work, I was able to see them. I thought maybe one day the Army might send me to Tokyo, but I never dreamed I'd actually be working right here and able to visit Uncle Masato."

Okudara, a Japanese Army WW II veteran, shared wartime stories with his nephew, himself a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The eighty-eight year-old Okudara did not speak any English, and Mento spoke only a few basic Japanese words. Mento's cousin, Tomoko Taylor, who teaches English in Tokyo, translated for the two.

"I have not seen my cousin since he was very young," said Tomoko, who went on to explain that their family lives in both Hawaii and Japan, but because of the war, Mento's family in Hawaii was separated from the family in Okinawa and Hokkaido.

"Our Uncle Konsun became an American Soldier during the war, and my fa-



Capt. Ryan Mento, middle, U.S. Army-Pacific, discusses family history with his uncle and cousin who live in Japan. Mento was able to visit while working Exercise Yama Sakura 57, an annual bilateral exercise between the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Army.

ther (Okudara) was a Japanese soldier, so the war actually broke the family into two," she said. "They were not able to talk."

"He (Okudara) thinks the importance of World War II isn't the winner or loser because in war we both lost many family members, and in that way everyone loses," translated Tomoko. "We as a family lost the ability to talk to each other."

In between discussing personal war stories, Okudara enlightened his nephew with new information about the family's soldier heritage and history, telling him about many relatives that served in a military capacity.

"I knew many of my uncles were interpreters for the (United States) and U.S. military during World War II but I never knew that (my uncle) actually fought for the U.S. Army in the 442nd Infantry Battalion in the European theater," said Mento. "Everything he shared, most of it I never knew before."

Okudara even drew a map of the island of Henna, an island of Okinawa on which the family safely managed to evade capture during the Allied occupation. He showed his nephew which part of the island family members were in on the map, sharing anecdotes and memories.

On The WEB

For more information about Exercise Yama Sakura 57, visit the Web site at www.usarpac.army.mil/yamasakura.

More photos are online at www.flickr.com/photos/usarpac.

After much discussion, Mento presented Okudara with a Hawaiian flag and the crest of the Signal Regiment, his regimental crest. The Hawaiian flag was a memento carried by Mento since he graduated from University of Hawaii's ROTC program. He described the meaning of the flag and the significance of its travels.

"I have carried this flag everywhere I have been with the Army and now I present it to you," he said to Okudara.

Okudara graciously accepted and had Tomoko place the flag in a place of prominence in his display case.

"I am nearly 90 years old and I don't know how long I can live after this, so this moment is very precious for me," said Okudara through translation. "I have so much gratitude for the visit from so far away, and I know I will not live so long, so I want my nephew to have this moment as a memory of his life."

Since its inception in 1982, Yama Sakura has focused on the development and refinement of the JGSDF and U.S. Army, Japan efforts in the areas of bilateral planning, coordination and interoperability through training.

Revamped Army.mil to deliver headlines, content readers want

C. TODD LOPEZ
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Since Dec. 4, visitors to Army.mil have been experiencing a new level of Web customization and personalization never seen before on a military Web site.

The team behind the Army's Web presence has redesigned the service's premier Web site, www.Army.mil, with the end-user in mind. Visitors to the site will be able to choose what kind of information they want to see on the front page and have the latest information that meets their criteria presented to them first, every time they visit.

The redesign of the site began more than a year ago, when the Army's Web team began brainstorming on how to meet a directive from then-Secretary of the Army Pete Geren to create a Web site to showcase a "world-class Army."

"The Web team came together to come up with ideas for how they would create a world-class site, and they came up with the idea of a customizable Web site — which is the first in the services to provide that," said Patricia Downs, deputy director of the Army's Online and Social Media Division.

Downs said the level of customization

now possible on the Army.mil site is new inside the Department of Defense. No other site has offered all users, both military and the general public, the ability to log into a site and customize information delivery and appearance options and then save those customizations for reuse on subsequent visits.

It took nearly 16 months for the team of Web developers, designers and content editors to create that capability, Downs said. "I'm very proud of them, and of what they've accomplished," she said of the team. "The next step is to get the word out about the site."

Army Web Team Program Manager Robbie Thompson said the new site's integration of social media, along with modularity and adaptability, place it on the cutting edge of not only DoD, but all federal government Web sites. He said the site is coincidentally leading the way with innovations and features recommended last year by the Federal Web Managers Council.

To take advantage of the features on the new site, users will first need to log in using credentials from AKO, or from select non-military Web sites such as Google, Yahoo! or AOL.

Once logged in, users can personalize their Army.mil experience by adding



and configuring any number of "widgets," each of which allows them to view different kinds of information from different sources.

"The best thing about Army.mil is that it's using the content that I want ... so that it's right there when I log in, all the time," said Meghan K. McCormick, Army.mil social media strategist and content manager.

One of the widgets that allows that to happen, for example, pulls headlines from other military service's Web sites, including the Air Force, the Marine Corps and the Navy. An additional widget allows users to display on their customized page those Army news headlines that come from their partic-

ular unit.

The RSS feed widget will allow users to display news headlines from virtually any source on their personalized Army.mil page.

"Every day, I try to read CNN — so if I wanted, I could pull in CNN's news feed," McCormick said.

Other available widgets provide access to information posted by Army organizations on such social networking sites as Twitter, Flickr, Facebook and YouTube. Another provides Army-related videos and Army newscasts.

"We are tailoring it to our audience," McCormick said. "The people coming to Army.mil, they are looking at these social media sites, and they want to see

Army social media."

Each widget the user adds to a page can be customized and placed anywhere on the page, so that each user's interaction with Army.mil is personalized to their liking.

"It allows anybody to come in and create a page that is customizable," McCormick said.

Initially, there'll be a total of 20 widgets available on the new Army.mil, but the team behind the redesign is working to add more, to make the Army.mil experience even more user-friendly and more able to deliver the information Soldiers want when they want it.

"We are looking at widgets that help people be more productive, to do their daily tasks," McCormick said.

To access the new features of Army.mil, visitors to the site should look for the login box that is featured there now.

Soldiers may log in using their existing AKO account login name and password. Those without AKO accounts, or those who would rather not use their AKO accounts, may log in to the site using a Google, Yahoo! or AIM password.

94th AAMDC challenges skills, breaks ground with live streaming webcast

CAPT. DAVID W. EASTBURN
94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command Public Affairs

FORT SHAFTER — In an era when service members and their families are forced to miss milestone events in both their personal and professional lives, a barrier was shattered and a bridge was built here, Dec. 2, and it all started with an idea from a devoted spouse.

Kelli Underhill, wife of the 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command's (AAMDC) Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Jeffery (Jeff) L. Underhill, first came up with the idea to do a live streaming webcast of her husband's promotion when she realized both of their children, Brandon, 23, and Britney, 21 would not be able to attend the ceremony.

With Brandon working in Ironton, Ohio, and

Britney away at college, it would be close to impossible having them in Hawaii for the ceremony.

"Our children have always been at every one of his promotions," Kelli said. "I just wanted them to be part of it, even though they couldn't be here physically, and most importantly, I wanted him to have them here."

The 94th AAMDC's Public Affairs Office (PAO) and G-6 communications (commo) team joined efforts to test their skills and problem-solving abilities in an effort to facilitate the webcast.

"We have never done anything like this before," said Tia Garrett, the unit's Information and Technology specialist. "We're aware that people have set up (video teleconferences) for family and friends to view promotions, but this was (a

first for us)."

To start, the team had to determine what web-based program or Web site to use. The majority of social networking sites are blocked on the network at Fort Shafter severely hindering the ability to stream video. In turn, the team set out on an Internet-wide search to find a site that wasn't blocked.

Next, they had to make sure they had a quality camera to transmit the images.

"Webcams don't produce the best picture, so we wanted to turn a camcorder into a webcam," Garrett said.

Using a computer, webcasting software and the commo team's

expertise, PAO was able to link its high-definition video camera to the computer and stream live video through the Internet and into the homes of the Underhill's friends and family all around the world.

"We were at Palm Circle on Fort Shafter, Hawaii, and (Brig. Gen. Underhill's) children in Ohio, as well as (deployed personnel in Iraq) that he previously served with, were able to see the promotion," Garrett said. "We're just happy and proud that we could be a part of it."

SEE WEBCAST, A-10

'Spur Ride' tests 2-14th CAV troops on knowledge, skills

Story and Photo by

SGT. MAJ. TERRY ANDERSON

8th Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS — Throughout our nation's history, Cavalry Soldiers were easily identified by their Stetsons and their spurs.

For the first time in two years, leaders in 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment decided to bring back a distinctive tradition that has its roots in knighthood, giving Soldiers an opportunity to 'earn their spurs' during the 2-14 Cavalry 'Spur Ride', Dec. 2 on Schofield Barracks.

"The reason the Spur Ride is so difficult is that it pushes the Soldiers to their limit: it tests their fortitude and how bad they want it, and when it's over with they have a strong sense of accomplishment," said 1st Sgt. Anthony Coates, Charlie Troop, 2-14 CAV. "Those that wear spurs are held to a higher prestige because they've en-



ured what it takes to earn their spurs."

More than 160 spur candidates began their day early, drawing their weapons and undergoing a detailed inspection of their equipment at 4 a.m. To earn their silver spurs, the Soldiers had to complete a road march, a live fire stress shoot, a grueling obstacle course on East Range, and an 8-mile

hike up Mount Kaala on Oahu's North Shore.

"Through shared hardship you form bonds of brotherhood," Coates said. "There's a number of mind games along the route — they were told they were going to take the bus all the way to the obstacle course, but we made them dismount, ground their gear, and

run more than 2 kilometers out to the obstacle course."

Left — Spur candidate Pvt. Kyle Rairigh, center, listens intently as Sgt. 1st Class Freddie Green, foreground, shouts instructions at a group of candidates during the 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment "Spur Ride," on Schofield Barracks, Dec. 2.

run more than 2 kilometers out to the obstacle course."

The Soldiers were divided up into six-person teams and had to work together in order to be successful. 1st Lt. Joseph Lewandowski said that it was a long, difficult day, but enduring the hardship of the Spur Ride strengthened the bonds between Soldiers in the squadron.

"I didn't know any of the people on my team when we started the day, but we learned a lot about each other as the day went on," said Lewandowski. "After 12 hours we were pretty smoked and really had to rely on each other to get the tasks done."

Squadron leaders and spur holders awarded Lewandowski and more than 140 Soldiers their silver spurs during a dining-in held at the Piliiaau Army Recreation Center in Waianae, Dec. 4.

"It was a lot harder than I expected," Lewandowski said. "I didn't expect to suffer as much as I did, but it was fun and well worth it."

According to Coates, the Spur Ride tradition goes back hundreds of years when knights were awarded spurs to enter into the fraternity of mounted warriors. The knights had to perform tasks to prove themselves worthy of wearing the spurs. Troopers in the U.S. Cavalry took part in rigorous training and had to prove their ability to perform with their horse before they could earn their spurs.

Today, some cavalry units also award gold spurs to Soldiers, signifying their service in a cavalry unit during combat.

307th JNN platoon fully operational: ready, capable to support Cobra Gold

LIANA MAYO

311th Signal Command Public Affairs

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS — The 307th Integrated Theater Signal Battalion (ITSB) Bravo Company recently fielded its first Joint Network Node (JNN) signal equipment. First Platoon, which maintains and operates this equipment, was evaluated and declared fully operationally capable (FOC) Nov. 18.

As a result, the platoon will provide JNN support for Cobra Gold, an annual, joint/combined exercise based in Thailand in January.

The platoon's first time supporting a U.S. Army, Pacific (USARPAC) mission will also be a first for the Army signal community, as it will be the first time that JNN equipment is used to support U.S. Pacific Command's Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP) exercise with Japanese defense forces.

JNN provides a suite of voice, video and data communication tools designed to meet the needs of division, brigade and battalion command post

structures. It's a rapidly deployable, early-entry system housed in an S-250 shelter and mounted on tactical vehicles for roll on/roll off mobility. Bravo Company's First Platoon is the only platoon in Hawaii using version five JNN equipment, which allows for high-speed connections as well as the ability to interface with legacy equipment.

The transitional process to take the platoon from initial operating capability (IOC) to FOC began Oct. 12 when 1st Platoon deployed to training sites Area X and Fire Point 212 on Schofield Barracks for a month-long exercise to observe and validate each team's ability to set up equipment and establish a secure connection within time standards.

"For most of the Soldiers in the Platoon, this was not only their first field training exercise, but also their first opportunity to test what they learned in Basic and Advanced Individual Training. It was time to try their hand at being a Signaleer," said Sgt. 1st Class Derek Davis, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, which consists of one

JNN team and five command post node (CPN) teams.

The exercise consisted of four phases: Crawl, Walk, Run and Certification. Throughout all phases, teams first performed tasks to standard and then to time. The 307th's S3 section was present throughout the exercise to guide them on the standards they would need to meet in order to become FOC.

During the Walk phase, each team began learning how to install their network packages. They also assembled and connected their 15- and 30-meter mast antennas for the high capacity line of site (HCLOS) system. The training environment intensified during the second week and the pace quickened. Teams were evaluated on their ability to smoothly assemble and connect the antennas and CPN systems.

Each training day yielded vast improvements, and by the end of the Run phase the teams were confident they would be declared FOC during the Certification phase.

As they rotated through the "box" to be evaluated, teams were timed on the setup of their equipment during daylight hours, validated through the successful completion of both secure and non-secure telephone calls to the JNN within time standards. There was also a night familiarization course for the setup of the line of site antennas during lowlight hours.

The CPN 2 team, led by Sgt. Christoforus Johnson, set the bar exceedingly high by surpassing training evaluation program (TEP) standards with only a three-person team, which is a half-manned team. The CPN 1 team, led by Staff Sgt. Christopher Clark, was also certified that same day. Soon thereafter, the remaining three CPN teams and the JNN team also exceeded the standards and were declared FOC.

"Both teams excelled in the day certification and night familiarization and exceeded the time standards during their first evaluations for FOC, which the rest of our teams had no trouble following," Davis said.

Have the Courage to Help a Buddy

"One suicide is one too many."

Kenneth O. Preston
Resident Major of the Army

Talk to your Chaplain or a
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Army approves new suicide training plan

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Army News Release

WASHINGTON — Suicide-intervention training is now available for Army leaders and other key personnel who are on the front lines of suicide prevention across the service.

The Army has approved two-day and five-day workshops on Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, known as ASIST. The workshops are produced by Living Works Education, Inc., at locations across the country.

The five-day ASIST workshop is a "train the trainers" course that will certify key Army personnel, who upon completion will be qualified to conduct the two-day ASIST course throughout the Army.

"We would never deploy Soldiers without first training them to accomplish their anticipated mission — why should suicide prevention be any different?" asked Brig. Gen. Colleen McGuire, director of the Army Suicide Prevention Task Force.

"When you go to the emergency room with a physical injury, you're right to expect the nurses and doctors are well-trained and can get you the care you need," McGuire said. "The same should be true if you're thinking of harming yourself and you choose to go to your leadership or other Army professionals seeking help."

The two-day ASIST workshops will train Army leaders, chaplains and chaplain assistants, substance abuse counselors, family advocacy program workers, medical and dental health professionals, and other care

providers in a range of suicide-prevention and intervention skills.

From identifying those who may be having thoughts of suicide to improved understanding of how beliefs and attitudes affect suicide interventions, Army personnel who complete the two-day course will be better able to save Soldiers, family members and Department of the Army civilians' lives and serve as an additional suicide prevention resource for Army commanders, said Walter Morales, Army suicide prevention program manager.

"We want to rapidly expand the suicide-prevention capabilities of our Army," Morales said. "That means making realistic, immediately useful training available for the key links in our suicide-prevention chain.

The two-day and five-day ASIST workshops provide both the intervention skills our community needs, and a way for us to get more qualified, competent and capable

trainers at units across the Army."

An updated version of the Army's regulation on Health Promotion (AR 600-63), which became effective Sept. 20, requires Army commands to maintain an appropriate number of certified suicide-intervention skills trainers on staff. An implementation timeline for this requirement, along with funding requirements and a target date for completion, are still pending, Morales said.

"Regardless of where a Soldier or Army civilian is assigned, we need to have the right number of trained suicide-intervention personnel in place," Morales said. "Soldiers must be confident they can get professional assistance when they reach out for it."

"I recently completed the two-day ASIST course," said Jan Morgan, a senior program analyst for the Army Suicide Prevention Task Force. "I didn't expect to be so impressed with the effectiveness of the training."

"It provides the opportunity to better understand the needs of a person at risk of suicide and learn how to use suicide 'first aid' to connect, understand and assist with persons at risk; identify 'invitations' for help; and listen for reasons for living. To me, ASIST is as valuable to saving someone's life as being CPR trained."

More information about the ASIST workshops is available at www.livingworks.net.

The ASIST training is intended to complement the Army's approved "Ask, Care, Escort" or ACE Suicide Prevention training currently available for all Soldiers and front-line supervisors.

BIKE: Realistic speeds, course aid training

CONTINUED FROM A-1

"By using an aircraft parking ramp," Houseberg continued, "we can simulate road conditions and turn geometry found on Oahu and operate using realistic road speeds — 35 to 60 miles per hour on a course that will be about two-thirds of a mile in length."

Each session of the course is just a half-day in length, but will give each student the opportunity to ride more than 40 miles and practice over 400 curves, all under the watchful eye of the California Superbike School team.

Classes are limited to military personnel, with priority going to Soldiers who have just returned from deployment. Other Soldiers and other military services may receive a "stand-by slot" up to a week prior to the class.

Students must sign themselves up using an online tool (Go to <https://air.lmi.org>; select "Pacific," "Hawaii" and "Advanced Mo-

For more information about the course, call 655-6746. To register, visit <https://airs.lmi.org>; select "Pacific," "Hawaii" and "Advanced Motorcycle Course" options.

torcycle Course"). Four sessions are available, and each session is limited to 30 riders, on a first-come basis.

Future courses are planned for February, May and August 2010; dates will be announced.

"This half-day course is not a substitute of the Basic and Experienced Rider Courses that meet Army requirements for Soldiers to ride a motorcycle," said Bill Maxwell, safety specialist and program manager, Installation Safety Office. "Instead, this class comes afterward, allowing riders to refine techniques that they have already been using."

Riders will need to show their Motorcycle

Safety Foundation Basic or Experienced Rider Course cards when they sign-in on class day. A thorough technical inspection of the motorcycle will be conducted by California Superbike School staff prior to class.

"This short class promises to be fun and challenging, and applies to any style of motorcycle, not just sport bikes," Maxwell added. "This is not the full track-based California Superbike School curriculum, but a set of key drills to improve everyone's street riding."

"Our course will be slightly wider than a normal traffic lane," Maxwell explained, "and there will be no oncoming traffic or roadside hazards to divert the student's attention, allowing them to give full concentration to learning."

He continued, "The learning curve we observed during the last class was dramatic. From the first few trips around the circuit to the end, the change in rider skills was quite apparent, even with experienced riders."

COLA: Employees will see no pay reduction

CONTINUED FROM A-1

force Subcommittee staff director said, "We have worked hard to craft this bill, and feel it is a very good one for employees."

OPM Deputy Associate Director for Performance and Pay Chuck Grimes said that among other things, the Act calls for locality pay to be phased-in over three years beginning in January and for COLA to be reduced by 65 percent of locality pay rates.

The legislation specifies that in 2010 the locality rate in all the non-foreign areas will be set at 4.62 percent – one third of the rest of U.S. locality pay rate, which is currently 13.86 percent.

When the law was enacted on Oct. 27, all COLA rates were "frozen," and COLA rates were reduced by 65 percent of the locality pay rate.

Location	Frozen COLA Rates	Locality Pay Rate Needed to Reduce COLA to Zero
Alaska		
• Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau	23%	35%
• Rest of Alaska	25%	38%
Hawaii		
• Counties of Honolulu	25%	38%
• Kauai, Maui and Hawaii County	18%	28%
Guam and CNMI (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)	25%	38%
Puerto Rico	14%	22%
U.S. Virgin Islands	25%	38%

Grimes explained, "Following the three-year phase-in period, the full locality pay rate will have been implemented,

but a reduced COLA will still be in effect." Each year, the "frozen" COLA rate will be reduced by 65 percent of the applica-

ble locality pay rate. OPM cannot accurately determine how long this method will take, but the accompanying table shows the locality rate needed to reduce the different COLA rates to zero.

As Akaka said when the bill passed, "Federal workers in Hawaii, Alaska and the Territories now finally have equity in their retirement pay."

"For too long," Akaka continued, "Hawaii federal employees received far less in retirement than employees on the mainland doing the same jobs. Those who wished to receive the full retirement benefits had to leave their families and work on the mainland for several years."

"That ends with this new law," Akaka emphasized.

(Editor's Note: Nancy Rasmussen is the command information chief at U.S. Army-Pacific Public Affairs.)

SURGE: Stop Loss still on way out

CONTINUED FROM A-1

send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan," Obama said. "After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home. These are the resources that we need to seize the initiative, while building the Afghan capacity that can allow for a responsible transition of our forces out of Afghanistan."

Criteria for a drawdown will include the ability of the Afghans to provide security for their own country, said David Sedney, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia.

"There's the criteria that we'll be looking for, and it'll be a district-by-district, province-by-province process," Sedney said in a blogger's roundtable, Tuesday night.

Equipping the Afghans to provide that security, said Brig. Gen. John Nicholson, director of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell, Joint Staff, will be the role of both American Soldiers and Coalition partners.

"We are also, with these additional forces, going to act as a critical catalyst to accelerate their development," Nicholson said of the Afghan Army.

H1N1: Vaccine for Soldiers determined by availability

CONTINUED FROM A-1

various command locations for active duty personnel are being scheduled as supplies are received.

The MILVAX-provided supplies are in addition to the 17,500 doses already provided to Hawaii military clinics for vaccinating military family members, health-care workers and first responders. The 17,500 doses are part of the 303,000 doses purchased by the federal government for Hawaii's civilian population. This stock is managed by the state health department as part of a nationwide federal program and distributed through a DOD-State partnership.

MILVAX, as part of DoD's force readiness protection mission, has ordered 2.7 million doses for all U.S. military forces worldwide. Doses allocated for Hawaii's forces have been delayed, due to manu-

facturing processes and prioritization of early shipments to military forces overseas, to ensure overall DoD mission readiness.

"We now have more vaccine than just a few weeks ago. But supplies are still limited. Those most at risk of getting flu complications should be first in line for vaccinations," said Maj. (Dr.) Paul Ciminera, deputy chief of preventive medicine at Tripler Army Medical Center.

Ciminera said all military clinics are following the basic CDC guidelines for the H1N1 vaccination priorities. Unlike seasonal influenza, most active duty personnel are young and are more susceptible to the flu virus than those 65 years and older, according to recent studies about the H1N1 flu pandemic.

As vaccine supplies have increased, the kinds of people who should get the H1N1 vaccinations now are:

- Pregnant women

- Persons who live with or provide care for infants less than 6 months of age, including parents, siblings and day care providers

- Health care and emergency medical service personnel

- First Responders

- Persons younger than 65 year old with certain medical conditions. Check with your doctor for the medical conditions. *

- Persons 6 mo. – 24 yrs. old (non-military members) **

- *Non-essential civilian workers should seek vaccinations from their usual health care providers.

- **Military members not in above categories will be vaccinated through their command programs with DOD vaccine as it becomes available.



Army spouses dedicated to Army family, selfless service

BILL MOSSMAN
Staff Writer

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS – Much of what makes the Army so great can be attributed to its many spouses whose responsibilities may include managing a home and rearing children, all the while tirelessly working daytime jobs to ensure the needs of their clients are met.

The Hawaii Army Weekly recently caught up with four such dedicated women, who, in making a difference in the lives of Soldiers and their loved ones here in Hawaii, have demonstrated that the saying, "Behind every great man, there's a great woman," is undeniably true.



Dizon



Rema



Vance

In the end, Dizon hopes that Soldiers will sense her genuine concern for them.

"I have a vested interest in Soldiers and their families, and I will do whatever it takes to assist them," she said.

Finding satisfaction in helping others

If Rema Reyes has learned one thing about life in the Army, it's that flexibility matters.

Married for the last 20 years, Reyes, her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Ruben Reyes, and their two children have adapted quite well to the transitory lifestyle required by the military.

"When we left Germany and got stationed here in Hawaii, we came together as a family and decided that the children and I would stay here while my husband deployed so that the children's schooling would not be interrupted," Reyes explained.

This was no easy decision for the Reyes, but they accepted the fact that the Army life demanded sacrifice. Reyes immediately got a job working for the Department of Human Resources as a postal clerk and eventually worked her way up to her current position as Lead Department of Human Resources Technician in the DA Boards section, here, at the Soldier Support Center. Her job has provided added family stability as well as a great deal of personal satisfaction.

"I love being able to help Soldiers. It just makes me feel good to be able to work with people I can relate to," she said.

She added that she is extremely sensitive to the Soldiers and their families needs.

"If I can help someone, I want to help them. I don't like the idea of giving Soldiers the run-around," Reyes explained. "I want people to feel like they have gotten quality service when they come to DA Boards."

(Editor's Note: Shahnaaz Mason contributed to this article. Loretta Simmons was unavailable for a photo.)

Serving those on the move

Loretta Simmons has been processing Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders for officers, here, since 2007. As a veteran of the Army herself and a spouse of a retired noncommissioned officer, she possesses keen insight into what officers and their families are going through when preparing to leave Hawaii for a new duty station.

"I know the anxiety that comes with having to pack up my home and prepare to PCS. So when I am working with these officers, I can give them tips and ideas to make their transitions a little smoother," explained Simmons, who has three adult sons currently serving in the military.

In addition to processing orders and assisting officers, Simmons takes the opportunity to help Soldiers' wives whenever possible.

"I try to prepare the wives for the transition. I know what it's like, I know the procedures, and I try to give them enough information so that they know what to expect," said the native of Chicago.

"I hope they listen closely," Simmons continued, "and feel that I gave them good information that will help them."

Accepting the call 'to assist the Soldier'

Human Resource Specialist Elizabeth Vance not

only helps enlisted Soldiers when they PCS to another duty station, but also provides them with encouragement and a listening ear.

"Some Soldiers come to me discouraged or experiencing stress in their families, and I try to encourage them," said Vance, who hails from Kissimmee, Fla. "I remind them that the new assignment is a new beginning. I encourage them to see it as an adventure with new blessings and opportunities to grow as a family or couple."

Vance, who has worked in various human resource positions with the military over the last eight years, enjoys assisting others.

"Every day I leave my job knowing that I have helped Soldiers, (and) that I made a change in someone's life," she said. "This is a good feeling."

Often mistaken for a veteran because of her knowledge of the military and her ability to relate to Soldiers so well, Vance admitted that she takes her job very seriously.

"I do whatever it takes to assist the Soldier, even if it means doing a lot of research," said the wife of Lt. James Vance, 325th Aviation. "I want to help the Soldier. I want the Soldiers and their families to have a positive experience as they go through the process of transitioning to another

duty station. I treat them with respect and try to get them to relax and have a pleasant and enjoyable transition process."

A true patriot with passion

She does not wear a uniform like her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Carlito Dizon, or daughter Charisse, who will be commissioned in May. But Angie Dizon, Human Resource Specialist and Chief of Family Movements and DA Boards, considers herself every bit the patriot in the service of her country.

"I have been dedicated to my work with the MPD since 1994," explained Dizon, who grew up in San Diego. "I kept my daughter as busy as possible and I built a support network while my husband deployed over the years."

Although she works long hours at the job, she says it is worth it. "I have a passion for helping people and providing them the services they need," Dizon said.

A creative approach to her job has helped her in providing the best customer service possible.

"I have developed innovations, come up with ideas to run departments more smoothly, and created training materials to help our staff better serve our customers," she said.

News Briefs

From A-4

Dec. 17-20, at Wheeler Army Airfield.

Classes are limited to 30 riders per session. Priority will be provided to Soldiers who have just returned from deployment.

Classes are scheduled 7:30-11:30 a.m. and noon-4 p.m. Students must sign up

using an online tool at <https://airs.lmi.org>. Select "Pacific," "Hawaii," then "Advanced Motorcycle Course."

Contact the Installation Safety Office for more information at 655-6746/6655. Future sessions are planned for February, May and August 2010.

18 / Friday

Dental Appointments – Due to re-deployment activities, routine dental ap-

pointments at all U.S. Army Dental Activity clinics at Tripler Army Medical Center and Schofield Barracks are limited through Dec. 18.

For more information, contact Sue Mendez-Johnson at 433-9200.

24 / Thursday

Office Closure – The 8th Theater Sustainment Command and U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Staff Judge Advocate

offices will be closed Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1, 2010, in observance of the holidays.

Ongoing

Commanders Referral Program – Commanders and first sergeants can approve up to \$1,000 of basic living expenses from Army Emergency Relief

(AER), which offers an essential training course that commanders and first sergeants must complete to use the program.

Classes run from 9-9:30 a.m., the fourth Wednesday of the month, at Army Community Service, Building 2091, Schofield Barracks. Call 655-4ACS (655-4227) to register or contact Jackie Torres, AER officer, at 655-7132, or e-mail Jacqueline.torres1@us.army.mil.



Mike Egami | U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

Push the red button

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS — The rain did not stop 4-year-old Monet Fanfair from pushing the red button that illuminated the 90-foot Norfolk pine tree at Generals Loop, here, during the north community's annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, Dec. 3. Encouraging her is her mom, Pvt. Kristy Holloway, chaplain assistant, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, and Brig. Gen. James Nixon, deputy commanding general of operations, 25th Infantry Division. View more photos of the ceremony at www.flickr.com/usag-hi.



Newly promoted Brig. Gen. Jeffery Underhill gives his remarks while being broadcast live to his family and friends across the world during his promotion ceremony at Fort Shafter, Dec. 2.

WEBCAST: Innovations, team effort make VTC reality for units

CONTINUED FROM A-5

Kelli was thrilled with the results, as well, as phone calls poured in at the reception from family and friends watching in Ohio, Texas and Virginia.

Daughter Britney, a student at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania, watched from the comfort of her room at the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority house.

"This is the best memory I can remember," she said. "I was able to see my dad's smile and my mom placing on his new rank. It was great to be able to see and hear my family when I couldn't be there. Watch[ing] ... from across the country was unbelievable."

Interested in setting up a VTC for your special event or ceremony?

In addition to your S6, the following resources are available for units interested in setting up a VTC, webcast or similar program:

- Army Community Service operates a VTC in its computer lab on Schofield Barracks. Call 655-4344.

- Visual Information lets units reserve and check out video equipment, projectors and portable sound systems. Call 655-4039.



PAU HANA



www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/haw.asp

"When work is finished!"

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2009



SKIES program dancers show off their holiday form during the annual Aliamanu Military Reservation Holiday Funfest. The event featured 18 dance performances by children as young as two years old.

Holiday time at AMR

Parade, performances and crafts begin holiday season for community

Story and Photos by **JACK WIERS**

U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

ALIAMANU MILITARY RESERVATION – Everywhere, children were at the ready, decked out in their holiday performance finest as they gathered at the gymnasium, here, Saturday, in preparation for the annual Aliamanu Military Reservation (AMR) Holiday Funfest Christmas program.

"It's too hot, but it's nice," offered mom Amber Rivera as she ushered eight-year-old daughter Isabelle, a Jingle Bells tap dancer, and 5-year-old son Sebastian, a theater performer. Both danced and performed to Christmas tunes on the tropical 80-degree day.

Bracing for the cold was Oklahoma-bound Anitia Miller, whose daughter Gabrielle performed as a member of the holiday program.

"I have to go to the cold," Miller said, "but this is nice."

The 13th Annual Holiday Funfest, coordinated through Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS), is one of the many ways the south community kicks off the holiday season. Prior to the afternoon entertainment, craft booths and informational display, the day started with a parade around AMR.

"The parade itself is kind of unique," said Nelson Acosta, acting director, School Age Services, Fort Shafter, and event coordinator. "It provides the opportunity for participants to interact and socialize with their neighbors."

Led by Santa Claus, the festivities moved to the AMR gymnasium following a parade.

Four-year-old Braydon Cox busied himself by stamping customized holiday themes onto wrapping paper that will be taken back to South Dakota.

"I miss Grandma," Braydon said while painstakingly applying varying paint applications for his present.

While many young ones were supervised in the creation of holiday cards, ornaments and the building of edible gingerbread cookie houses,



Two-year-old Zoe Johnson and big sister Miyah, 9, build a gingerbread house at the Holiday Funfest, Saturday.



Gabrielle Kesolei, 9, daughter of 1st Sgt. Celestine and Pearl Kesolei, performs a hula.

the crowd of more than 700 turned their attention to the stage in time for the afternoon entertainment, the



SKIES Administrator Sandy Salisbury receives her 2nd place award as "Outstanding Director of a Youth Show" from Youth Educational Support Services Director Tamsin Keone at the Aliamanu Military Reservation Holiday Funfest, Saturday, where SKIES participants entertained a crowd of more than 700 with a three-hour program of performances.

highly successful CYSS program, SKIES (Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skill) Unlimited.

Little Dakota Schmidt, 2, rested comfortably in the arms of her father,

Staff Sgt. John Schmidt, who recently returned from Iraq with the 25th I n -

fantry Division, in November.

"When I left for Iraq, Dakota was barely walking ... now she's dancing," Schmidt beamed, after Dakota finished her creative movement performance with half a dozen other two-year-olds.

More than 200 children took to the stage before the morning was finished. SKIES Director Sandy Salisbury guided the program from a pilot status five years ago to the high-profile program that now serves children as young as two with classes that span an ever-increasing range of performing arts.



See more photos from the AMR Holiday Funfest at www.flickr.com/usag-hi.

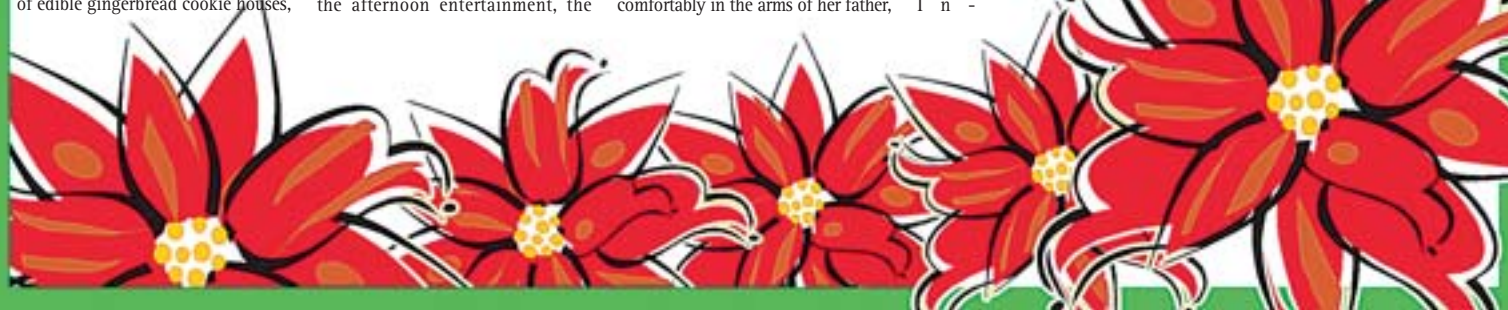
SKIES Unlimited recently won 11 national awards. At this year's 4th of July Spectacular, a SKIES Unlimited rock band entertained more than 30,000 spectators as the opening act before rock group Kansas performed.

"We've come a long way since we had 22 children perform at the Easter Festival (five years ago)," Salisbury said.

The award-winning SKIES program features 115 classes and a monthly participation of 600-850 children, along with a staff of 28 instructors and 14 contractors.

Salisbury has not been surprised at the organization's success.

"I knew this type of instruction would go well with our families," she said, "particularly now with the current explosion of the performing arts."





11 / Today

High School Musical 2 – Army Community Theatre presents the smash musical hit “High School Musical 2” at Richardson Theatre, Fort Shafter, tonight and Dec. 12, at 7:30 p.m.
 Tickets cost \$12-\$20, and they are available at www.armytheatre.com. Call 438-4480.

Hawaiian Luau at PARC – Experience old Hawaii at the Piliiaau Army Recreation Center (PARC) luau, today, 6 p.m., on the Sunset Café lanai.
 Blue Star Card holders receive a 10-percent discount. Parties of four or more should call to reserve seating at 696-4778.

12 / Saturday

USO Presents: Sesame Street Live – Military families are invited to enjoy furry, fuzzy fun with the muppets during two performances of “Sesame Street Live,” Dec. 12, at Martinez Physical Fitness Center, Schofield Barracks.
 Shows begin at 3 and 5:30 p.m. Games, crafts and children’s activities will be available between shows. Call 655-0112/6.

Newcomers ACS Island Tour – Are you new to the island? Check out the free newcomers island tour. The next tours are scheduled to depart Dec. 12 and 26, at 8 a.m., from Schofield Barracks Army Community Service (ACS), or from Fort Shafter Flats ACS, Dec. 17, 8 a.m.
 Call 655-4227 or 438-4499 to get on board the next trip.

Graham Cracker Candy House Workshop – Bring the kids to make your own edible candy Christmas house, Dec. 12, 10 a.m.-noon, at the Schofield Barracks Arts and Crafts Center.
 Cost is \$10, and participants will walk away with a fun treat and holiday memories. Call 655-4202.

13 / Sunday

Library Closure – The Sgt. Yano Library, Schofield Barracks, will be closed Dec. 13 for carpet cleaning. Call 655-8002.

17 / Thursday

Texas Hold ‘Em Poker Tournament – The next Texas Hold ‘Em tournament takes place Dec. 17, 6-9:30 p.m., at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks.
 Card players can test their skills against the best-of-the-best poker players on post. All ID cardholders 18 and older are welcome. Call 655-5698 for more information.



Send announcements to community@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.

15 / Tuesday

Food, Fellowship & Fun – The Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC) will host their December Christmas program, Dec. 15, 9 a.m., at the Main Post Chapel Annex, Room 212. Free child care is available with reservations. Contact Valerie at valeriepwoc@me.com or 753-3584 for more information.

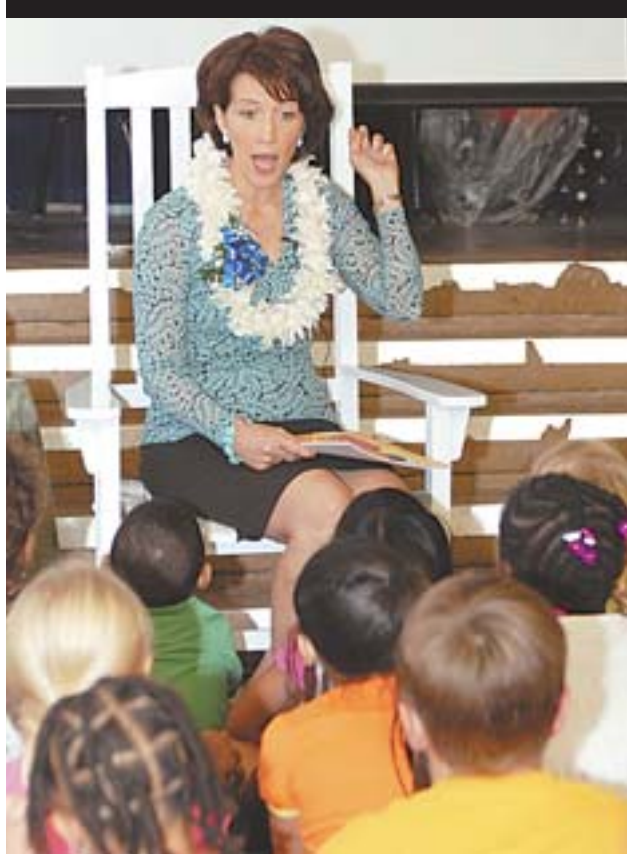
17 / Thursday

Live Televised Town Hall – U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii community members will have the opportunity to ask questions on-air during the first-ever televised town hall forum hosted by Maj. Gen. Michael J. Terry, senior commander, U.S. Army-Hawaii, and Col. Matthew Margotta, commander, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, Dec. 17, 7-8 p.m.

Panel members currently scheduled for the broadcast include; Lt. Col. Richard Gledhill, commander, U.S. Army Garrison-Oahu (USAG-Oahu), and USAG-Oahu Command Sgt. Maj. Darryl Jannone, along with subject matter experts from the Army’s medical and housing communities.
 During the broadcast, community members can ask questions by calling 655-1383 or 655-5015. Phone lines will be operational Dec. 17, from 6-8 p.m.
 Questions can also be submitted now at www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil (click on the “Ask The Commander” link on the left) or at www.twitter.com/usaghi.

20 / Sunday

Salvation Army Angel Tree – Pearlridge Mall shoppers can share their aloha for the community by choosing an angel from a Salvation Army Angel Tree



Sgt. Taeon Bing | U.S. Army-Pacific Public Affairs

‘Tell me a story’

FORT SHAFTER — Rhonda Mixon, wife of Lt. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, commanding general, U.S. Army-Pacific, reads the book “While You’re Away” to a group of children, at the Fort Shafter Elementary School, during “Read Me a Story” night, Dec. 2. The book focuses on teaching children to cope with loved ones’ deployments.

18 / Friday

Big R: Countdown to Redeployment – Blue Star Card (BSC) holders can satisfy their sweet tooth this holiday season, with a BSC cookie exchange, Dec. 18, 6-8 p.m., at the Nehelani.

Participants should bring 2-3 dozen of their favorite cookies or treats to share with everyone. Participants will also enjoy a special BSC edition of the game “Pictionary” with a festive twist. Light pupus and child care will be provided.

To register for this event, call 655-0002 or e-mail sarah.chadwick@us.army.mil, by Dec 15. Submit your cookie recipe when you R.S.V.P.

Waikiki Party Bus – Let Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation be your own personal chauffeur to Waikiki on payday Fridays. The free party bus runs again, Dec. 18, 9 p.m.-4 a.m., and Dec. 31, for New Year’s Eve.

The bus is free, but tickets are required to reserve your seat. Pick-ups are available at both Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter. Call 655-9971 or 438-1985.

Ongoing

Fort Shafter Library Closure – The Fort Shafter Library will be temporarily closed for remodeling now through Feb. 26, 2010. When reopened, the new energy-efficient library will have new windows, central air conditioning, energy-efficient lights and remodeled bathrooms.
 Library activities previously advertised during this time period have been cancelled. Call 655-8000.

AFAP 2010 – All Aboard! “Ride the Train of Change” at Army Family Action Plan 2010. Get on board today with your quality of life issues by submitting AFAP issues for the 2010 Installation Conference today.

2010 AFAP conference dates are Jan. 26-28, 2010, at the Nehelani, Schofield Barracks. Issues can be submitted online at www.mwrrarmyhawaii.com or via fax, 655-1654, at the Schofield Barracks Army Community Service (ACS), and at the Tripler Army Medical Center ACS

and granting the wish of a child or a senior citizen who otherwise would not receive any gifts at Christmas. The Angel Tree will be located Uptown, now through Dec. 20, during center hours.

22 / Tuesday

Modified Holiday Hours – The Fort Shafter Thrift Shop will be closed Dec. 22, 24, 25, 29, 31 and Jan. 1, 2010 in observance of the holidays. The Fort Shafter Thrift Shop is normally open Tuesday and Friday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and Thursday, 2-6 p.m.

Ongoing

NORAD Tracks Santa – For more than 50 years, NORAD and its predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) have tracked Santa’s Christmas Eve flight. Children can track Santa’s progress across the skies of the Pacific or anywhere in the world at the North American Aerospace Defense Command, (NORAD), Web site at www.norad.santa.org.

Food For Families – The Armed Services YMCA accepts donations of nonperishable items to replenish its food pantry. Its emergency food locker is available to families experiencing financial difficulty and needing extra assistance.
 Supplies of canned goods, frozen food, dry goods and other items are accepted and usually available. Call 624-5645.

Scholarship Available – The National Military Family Association will accept applications for its Joanne Holbrook Patton Military Spouse Scholarship Program through Jan. 31.

Available in amounts up to \$1,000, the scholarships are awarded to military spouses to obtain professional certification or to attend post secondary or graduate school.

Spouses of uniformed service members (active duty, National Guard and Reserve, retirees, and survivors) of any branch or rank are eligible to apply. The scholarship funds may be used to assist with tuition, fees, and school room and board.

For more information or for an application, visit www.militaryfamily.org/ scholarship.

Twitter – Do you Twitter? Follow the garrison at www.twitter.com/usaghi. For more information, call 656-3153.

Art and Essay Contest – The Armed Services YMCA’s annual art and essay contest invites military children to create artwork and essays on this year’s themes, “My Military Hero” and “My Military Family.” Entries for the art contest must be postmarked no later than Feb. 19, 2010, and are for children in grades K-6.

Students in grades 1-12 are asked to write their essay about “My Military Hero” and postmark entries no later than March 19, 2010.
 Winning entrees will be displayed in a number of locations in the Washington D.C. area, and winners will be recognized at a luncheon on Capitol Hill. Entry forms are available at www.asymca.org.

Operation: Military Kids Camp – Operation: Military Kids Camp (OMK), Hawaii, along with YMCA-Camp Erdman are offering two family-camps geared toward helping recently redeployed service members and their families reconnect. The camp scheduled, April 9-11, 2010, and is open for registration.

Visit www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/4h/omk, or e-mail omk@ctahr.hawaii.edu, or call 956-4125.

MyCAA Financial Assistance – The Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA) program is providing \$6,000 for education and training in

Satellite Center. Contact Michael Briglin, AFAP manager, at 655-1696 or e-mail michael.briglin@us.army.mil.

Confidential Counseling – Military and Family Life Consultants (MFLC) are available to assist Soldiers and family members by providing short-term, situational, problem-solving counseling services, which are private and can be arranged by calling 222-7088. If your issue is financial-based, call an MFLC personal financial counselor at 265-8136.

BSC Facebook page – Stay current on all upcoming Blue Star Card (BSC) events and activities at the BSC Facebook page. R.S.V.P. online to attend events, see photos, and tag your friends with special BSC stickers. Find BSC at www.facebook.com.

Family Child Care – Individuals interested in caring for children in their home should inquire with the Child and Youth Services (CYS) Family Child Care (FCC) Program. Benefits include free training, additional income and flexible hours.
 Call the AMR FCC office at 837-0236 or the Schofield Barracks FCC at 655-8373.

FMWR Happenings – To find out more information about Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR) activities, programs and facilities, pick up a copy of the Discovery magazine available at FMWR facilities throughout U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii installations. Visit www.mwrrarmyhawaii.com.

Hawaiian Workshop – The Army Community Service (ACS) Relocation Readiness Program is offering a Hawaiian culture workshop for Soldiers and families. The 10-week workshop, “Umeke Kaeo,” or vessel of knowledge, meets each Wednesday, 6-8 p.m., at the ACS, Schofield Barracks.

Children 6 years and older are welcome to participate; child care is not provided. To register, call 655-4227.

Wishing Tree – When a loved one is deployed, those left behind are full of wishes: that he’ll be safe, that she’ll be home soon, that the children will adjust to the separation.

The staff at the Sgt. Yano Library has created a “wishing tree” as a place to collect wishes, hopes and prayers from friends and family of deployed Soldiers.

Everyone is welcome to make a wish on a paper leaf or heart, which will be displayed on the tree. Call 655-8002.

Community Needs Assessment Survey – Soldiers and families in the Army Hawaii community are invited to share their opinion on programs and services provided by the Army Community Service Family Advocacy Program.

Community members can win a \$100 AAFES gift certificate by participating in the Community Needs Assessment survey during the next six months.

Call Regina Peirce at 655-0596.

any University of Maryland University College (UMUC) program, including business and management, education, financial services, health services, homeland security, human resources, information technology and more.

Most programs are offered online. Some programs may only be offered at certain UMUC campuses. Spouses of active duty or activated Guard or Reserve service members are eligible. Visit www.umuc.edu/mycaa/.

Religious Services – A full list of all services, children’s programs and educational classes the garrison’s Religious Support Office offers can be found online at www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil.

From the home page, click on “Religious Support,” which is under the “Directorates & Support Staff” menu.

For more information, call 655-6644 (North communities) or 833-6831 (South communities).

Pacific Aviation Museum Offer – The Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor is offering one free keiki admission (4-12 years old) with each paid adult admission every Saturday and Sunday. Children under 4 are always free.

Adult ticket rates are \$14; \$10 for kamaaina and military. The museum is open 9 a.m.-5 p.m., daily.

Visit www.PacificAviationMuseum.org, or call 441-1000.

Recycling – Keep unwanted metals and plastics out of landfills by recycling old cellular phones. Proceeds generated from this initiative will help fund environmental projects and Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation events for the community. Call 656-5411 or 864-1048 for a pick up or drop off at the Environmental Division offices, Building 105, 3rd floor, Wheeler Army Airfield.

All items will be collected when customers request a regular pick up.

To learn more about on-post recycling efforts, go to www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil, and click on “Sustainability.”



Additional religious services, children’s programs, educational services and contact information can be found at www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil. (Click on “Religious Support Office” under the “Directorates and Support Staff” menu).

- AMR: Aliamanu Chapel
- FD: Fort DeRussy Chapel
- FS: Fort Shafter Chapel
- HMR: Helemano Chapel
- MPC: Main Post Chapel, Schofield Barracks
- PH: Aloha Jewish Chapel, Pearl Harbor
- TAMC: Tripler Army Medical Center Chapel
- WAAF: Wheeler Army Airfield Chapel

Buddhist Services
 •First Sunday, 1 p.m. at FD
 •Fourth Sunday, 1 p.m. at MPC Annex

Catholic Masses
 •Friday, 9 a.m. at AMR
 •Saturday, 5 p.m. at FD, TAMC and WAAF chapels
 •Saturday, 6 p.m. a Hawaiian-style Mass (May-Aug. only) near the Army Museum (FD).
 •Sunday services:
 -7:30 a.m. at WAAF
 -8 a.m. at AMR
 -10:30 a.m. at MPC Annex
 -11 a.m. at TAMC
 •Monday-Friday, noon at MPC and TAMC

Gospel Worship
 •Sunday, noon at MPC
 •Sunday, 12:30 p.m. at AMR

Islamic Prayers and Study
 •Friday, 1 p.m. at MPC Annex
 •Saturday and Sunday, 5:30 a.m., 6, 7 and 8 p.m. at MPC Annex

Jewish Shabbat (Sabbath)
 •Monday, 6 p.m. at PH (Bible Study)
 •Friday, 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, 8:15 a.m. at PH

Orthodox Divine Liturgy
 •Sunday, 9 a.m. at TAMC

Pagan (Wicca)
 •Friday, 7 p.m. at MPC Annex

Protestant Worship
 •Sunday Services
 -9 a.m. at FD, FS, MPC, TAMC and WAAF chapels
 -10 a.m. at AMR and HMR



Call 624-2585 for movie listings or go to cafes.com under realtime movie listing.



Michael Jackson's This Is It
 (PG)
 Fri., Dec. 11, 7 p.m.

Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause
 (PG)
 Sat., Dec. 12, 11 a.m.
 (Special kid’s Santa package deal offered for \$5. See details below.)

Thur., Dec. 17, 7 p.m.



Disney's A Christmas Carol
 (PG)
 Sat., Dec. 12, 4 p.m.
 Sun., Dec. 13, 2 p.m.

The Box
 (PG-13)
 Wed., Dec. 16, 7 p.m.

Kid's Santa Package Deal
 Sat., Dec. 12
 Special kids package includes; admission, a “surprise visit” at 10:30 a.m. and a kid special combo meal for \$5. Movie begins at 11 a.m.

Military bikers support local youth with 'Toys for Tots'

Story and Photos by
BILL MOSSMAN
Staff Writer

HONOLULU — 'Twas the morn when the traditional bell sounds associated with the holiday season were replaced with the thundering roar of engines.

'Twas the time of unorthodoxly dressed Santas, many of whom sported either shaved heads or long ponytails, tattoos and body piercings, and puffed on cigars or cigarettes rather than anything resembling St. Nick's smoking pipe.

'Twas the day when gifts were not placed in large knapsacks, but rather, inside of saddlebags, on tops of trailers, or strapped to handlebars and sissy bars.

'Twas all of this and more, and it still had a Christmas ring to it.

Biker style, of course.

Thousands of motorcycles descended upon Waikiki, Sunday, for the 35th Annual Street Bikers United Hawaii Toy Run Parade, a benefit for local youngsters through the Marine Corps Reserves' Toys for Tots program.

Among the participants were many veterans, as well as active duty and reserve service members from all branches of the military, all of whom pulled together for a worthy cause.

"The services are well-represented out here today," said Master Sgt. Charles Owens, first sergeant, 305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (MPAD), 9th Mission Support Command. "Giving back to the community is what the military is all about. That's what we live for."

For the last several years, Owens has garnered a heap of attention at the annual event, in large part due to his red-and-white Honda Valkyrie and what it has in tow. The large bike was on hand again, pulling a sleigh full of presents, and drawing a lot of "oohs" and "aahs" from the crowd due to its 500 lights, which ran off a car battery with an inverter.

"Santa likes to give his reindeer a vacation for a little bit whenever he's in Hawaii," explained Owens, who was joined at the event by fellow members of the biker club, Hawaii Goldwing Road Riders Association (HGRRA). "So instead of pulling the sleigh with reindeer, we pull it with a motorcycle. The kids really love the Hawaiian-style Santa pulling up and dropping off gifts. It makes them go nuts.

"I started doing this about four years ago, when me and some Army reservists built this sleigh to help get out into the community and show our appreciation," Owens continued. "Since then, we've been bringing this sleigh out to the Toys for Tots event, different parades



Master Sgt. Charles Owens, first sergeant, 305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 9th Mission Support Command, gets ready to pull a sleigh carrying Santa (Fred Chang), the Grinch, dozens of presents and 500 lights, from Magic Island to Kapiolani Community College, during the 35th Annual Street Bikers United Hawaii Toy Run Parade, Sunday. Thousands of bikers participated in the benefit, including those from Owen's club, the Hawaii Goldwing Road Riders Association.



Gift-bearing bikers roll out of the Magic Island parking lot eager to get their motors running for the 35th Annual Street Bikers United Hawaii Toy Run Parade, Sunday.



Roger Hirai and his passenger, Brown Bear, bask in the early morning sun prior to the start of the parade, at Magic Island, Sunday. Hirai said he got Brown Bear for a reasonable price at Longs Drug Store, and the furry animal, he added, would hopefully brighten the holiday season for a needy youngster.

around Hawaii, and even to the different military bases when they have unit parties."

Bikers brought a variety of presents to the parade, from stuffed teddy bears and dolls to board games and skate-

boards. Sgt. 1st Class Chris Laye, 13th Military Police Detachment, for example, decided his haul would have to include several Transformers' models, namely, the highly coveted Bumblebee.

It was the kind of toy he would have hoped for in his youth, he said.

"I got shovels when I was a kid," noted Laye, while sorting through presents stored away in the saddlebags of his 2006 Harley-Davidson Street Glide bike.

"I got rocks and sticks," added his girlfriend, Christy Wilden, before breaking into laughter.

Riders from numerous biker clubs began pulling into the Magic Island parking lot at Ala Moana Beach Park during the early morning hours of the day, and lining up their motorcycles of all makes and sizes. After killing their engines, the bikers warmly embraced each other, many of them once again enjoying the company of old riding buddies.

But while the camaraderie was nice, it was not the reason for the gathering. These bikers had come to show what they — long ago stereotyped as blights on civic behavior and responsibility — could do for the good of society.

Their collective aim, as is the goal of the Toys for Tots program, was to send a message of hope to needy youngsters through the gift of giving. In doing so, they trusted that the youth would grow to become responsible, productive and patriotic citizens.

Many believe the bikers succeeded in their mission.

"I think it's great when people can come out and see these bikers doing something great for the community," said Sgt. Charity Boedeker, a broadcast reporter with 305th MPAD, and on hand to document the day's activities. "There's usually a stereotype that often goes with bikers, and it's kind of sad, but this kind of event shows that they're people with hearts."

Holiday parades, fairs scheduled around island

The holiday season is here. Families can get in the spirit of the season at a variety of magical events taking place around the island of Oahu during December.

Today, Dec. 11

Ballet Performance — The Hawaii State Ballet and Mamiya Theater will perform the Nutcracker Ballet, Dec. 11-13 and 18-20, at Mamiya Theatre (3140 Waiālae Ave.).

Friday shows are at 7 p.m., Saturday shows are at 3:30 and 7 p.m., and Sunday shows are at 1 and 4:30 p.m.

The opening night performance, today, 7 p.m., is Military Appreciation Night, and all seats are \$15.

Order online with promotional code "snow" at www.hawaiistateballet.com/tickets or call 550-8457.

For more information, call Cathy at 947-2755.

Holiday Concert — The Honolulu Choral will hold a performance in English of "A Christmas Oratorio," today, 7 p.m., at the Community Church of Honolulu. Admission is free. Call 595-0327.

Holiday Concert — Hawaii Pacific University's International Choral, Vocal Ensemble, and Chamber Orchestra will hold its 8th Annual Winter Concert, "What Sweeter Music," today, 7 p.m., at Central Union Church, 1660 South Beretania. Admission and parking are free. For more information, call 544-1127.

Saturday, Dec. 12

Holiday Parades — Several holiday parades are scheduled around the island, Dec. 12:

• Aiea Holiday Parade, 9 a.m. — The Annual Christmas parade sponsored by the Aiea Community Association will start at

Pearlridge Park and proceed on Moanalua Road, ending at Aiea Sugar Mill Park. Call 429-1282.

• Ewa Beach/Lions Club Holiday Parade, 10 a.m. — The Ewa Beach Christmas Parade with marchers and floats starts at the Boys and Girls Club and proceeds to Hanakahi Street, ending at Ewa Beach Shopping Center. Call 864-4634.

• Waimanalo Holiday Parade, 10 a.m. — Welcome in the Christmas season with a parade in Waimanalo featuring school bands, marching units, lots of smiles and, of course, Santa. Call 527-5759.

Santa's Arrival — Welcome the world's most famous elf as he arrives via outrigger canoe at Waikiki Beach, Dec. 12, 9 a.m., in front of the Outrigger Waikiki hotel. Santa's arrival will be followed by keiki hula dancing, music and complimentary photos with Santa. This event is free.

Sunday, Dec. 13

Scandinavian Christmas — Join the Scandinavian Club of Hawaii for a Christmas celebration, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m., at the Hale Koa Hotel. The evening begins with dinner and the Santa Lucia procession.

Members fee is \$35; nonmembers, \$40. R.S.V.P. by Dec. 9; call 946-5538 or visit www.scandinavianclubofhawaii.org.

Christmas Concert — The Oahu Choral Society presents Christmas with the Honolulu Symphony Chorus and Honolulu Chamber Choir, Dec. 13, 5:30 p.m., at Andrew's Cathedral (at Beretania and Queen Emma streets). The program will include works by Bach, Handel and other classical composers, as well as popular carols.

Tickets cost \$20 for adults, and \$10 for students, military and seniors. Children under 16 are free. Tickets are available via e-

mail, oahuchoral@gmail.com, or at the door. Visit www.oahuchoral.com

Craft Fair — The Kolekole Service Unit Girl Scouts will host a holiday craft fair, Dec. 13, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Scout Hut, Ulrich Way, Schofield Barracks.

Crafts made by Girl Scouts and their leaders, primarily from Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Army Airfield, will be showcased.

For more information, call Frank Godek at 383-8896 or Penny Johnson at 203-8780.

Sunday, Dec. 20

Concert — Na Leo will perform their 25th Annual Holiday Music Spectacular, Dec. 20, 22 and 23, 7:30 p.m., at the Hale Koa Hotel.

The concert is open to the public, and military discounts are available. Ticket prices start at \$35. Call 888-995-5558, or visit www.naleo.net/holidayshow.

Friday, Dec. 25

USO Christmas — The Airport USO will host a Christmas dinner Dec. 25, 11:30 a.m. During that time, free phone and video calls will be provided by Skype to USOs around the world to keep traveling troops and family members connected with loved ones.

Call 836-3351 for more information.

Ongoing

FMWR Ornament Sale — The Na Koa Aina holiday ornament sale, sponsored by Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR), supports the Army Community Service Financial Readiness holiday food voucher program. Ornaments can be purchased at all FMWR facilities, now-Dec. 14.

Ornament prices start at \$5. Call 655-4789 for more information.

Comedians, stars give gift of humor for troops

SHARI LOPATIN
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

A famous rock star recruited top comedians to donate their best comedy routines and acts for a free CD especially for those in uniform and their families: "Stand Up for the Troops."

You can't laugh this off. Chris Rock dogging on big pieces of chicken for dads and Adam Sandler's musical escapades of Sloppy Joes during "Lunch Lady Land."

It's here for you, for free, as thanks for your service. Led by Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter John Ondrasik, from the band "Five for Fighting," this year's CD for the troops also includes comedy acts from Ray Romano, Jeff Foxworthy, Dana Carvey, Dennis Miller and more.

You just need your valid military ID to download the tracks for free at www.cdforthetroops.com or www.aafes.com, the Web site for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES).

Ondrasik included his song "Brothers in Arms," from the award-winning documentary, "Brothers at War." TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Sony and the AAFES all partnered with Ondrasik to bring this gift to service members, veterans and their families.

In addition to the free downloads, 200,000 CDs will arrive at military bases, Armed Services YMCAs, USO Centers, Fisher Houses and other locations throughout the U.S. and overseas.

Stop the Spread of Germs

Tell your health care provider immediately if you have any of these symptoms: fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, nasal congestion or body aches.

Cover Coughs and Sneezes



- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Drop your used tissue in a waste basket.

If Asked, Wear a Mask



- Secure ties behind head or place elastic bands behind ears.
- Fit elastic band at top of mask to bridge of nose.
- Fit mask snug to face and below chin.

Clean Your Hands



- Wash with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds.
- Clean with alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Especially:
 - After using the restroom.
 - After sneezing or blowing nose.
 - Before touching food.
 - Before touching your eyes, mouth or nose.



Take charge to protect self, loved ones from flu viruses

MAJ. (DR.) PAUL CIMINERA

Tripler Army Medical Center

HONOLULU — While getting the H1N1 vaccine is the single, best way to prevent getting sick from the flu, there is no cure-all “silver bullet.” Human life is a remarkable system of trillions of cells working in a system of checks and balances to keep us healthy. When we are healthy, they are working well together. When we feel sick, vital organs, like our lung cells, are being overwhelmed by abnormal conditions like an H1N1 virus infection.

Today's vaccines use inert or weakened forms of a virus to prime the body's natural defense mechanisms to produce the right antibodies to fight infection. When a more active form of the virus gets into the body, the body is ready to react more quickly to fight it.

The body has other automatic defense mechanisms. A low-grade fever (heat) can slow the growth of a viral infection, so that other defense mechanisms like virus-destroying white blood cells have more time to do their work.

The body's defenses sometimes work against each other. A fever that is too high may damage

cells and cause other serious complications. When this happens, a fever-reducing drug like Motrin or Tylenol may be needed. Aspirin should never be given to children with a fever due to influenza.

Different germs and viruses grow better in certain areas of our body, and not so well in others. For example, flu viruses don't enter the body through skin cuts and abrasions, but hepatitis viruses do.

Flu viruses grow well in our air passages like the throat and lungs. Keeping the virus from getting in them with good hygiene habits will reduce the chance of getting the flu. Noses, mouths and eyes are the primary pathways to our throats and lungs.

A few good hygiene habits include these:

- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Sneeze into tissues or into sleeves.
- Keep fingers away from mouths, from rubbing eyes or from touching noses.

These habits are simple and effective. If you have habits that need to be changed, remind yourself constantly, until they are second nature.

(Editor's Note: Maj. (Dr.) Paul Ciminera is the deputy chief of Preventive Medicine at Tripler Army Medical Center.)

Hand washing is key to staying healthy, stopping spread of germs

WENDY LAROCHE

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

Hand washing is a simple act that can prevent the spread of infections and illnesses. Just 15 to 20 seconds of regular hand-washing can reduce the spread of germs that lead to the common cold, flu, diarrhea and hepatitis A. Along with being vaccinated from the flu, hand washing can help protect you from catching influenza.

The most common way that infections are spread is through the hands. When people sneeze or cough, they usually cover their nose or mouth with their hand. If they don't wash their hands and then shake hands with another or touch a door-knob, the germs will be spread.

Germs from viruses can remain on objects from 20 minutes up to two hours.

How often should you wash your hands? Where there is no set requirement, medical guidelines suggest that you should wash your hands frequently throughout the day. The basic rule is to wash hands before and after preparing food (especially after handling uncooked meat and poultry); before eating; after coughing, sneezing or blowing one's nose; after using the bathroom; and after changing diapers.

Hand washing is recommended whenever hands come in contact with body fluids, including vomit, saliva and runny noses.

Washing your hands with soap and water is the most common and recommended way to remove germs. Both plain hand soaps and antimicrobial hand soaps are effective in removing



Be a “flu fighter.” Hand washing is key to staying healthy during the influenza season. “Hand Washing Awareness Week” kicks off Sunday, and post health officials stress the importance of good hygiene habits. Washing hands in warm water and soap for 20 seconds or more is the number one way to prevent disease.

germs. To ensure that you are properly washing your hands, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following hand washing tips:

- Wet hands with clean running warm water and apply soap.

- Rub hands together to make lather and scrub all surfaces.

- Continue rubbing hands for 15-20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing “Happy Birthday” twice through or singing the Alphabet Song.

- Rinse hands well under running water.

- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use the paper towel to turn off the faucet.

If you don't have access to running water, having alcohol-based hand wipes and/or gel sanitizers can also be effective at removing germs that may be on the hands. Both wipes and gel

sanitizers are easy to carry around.

A study conducted at the U.S. Army Field Artillery Training Center, Fort Sill, Okla., showed that the training battalions that used instant hand sanitizer (IHS) as part of their daily routine experienced less respiratory illnesses, less gastrointestinal illnesses and fewer health care encounters than the control group that did not use the IHS.

When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, apply product to the palm of the hand, rub hands together and rub the product over all surfaces of the hands and fingers until hands are dry.

Protect yourself and others by simply washing your hands as part of your normal routine, which doesn't take long and is extremely beneficial.

(Editor's Note: Wendy LaRoche is a health educator with the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.)

You Drink.
You Drive.
You Lose.

Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes kill someone every 31 minutes and nonfatally injure someone every two minutes.

— National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Injuries caused by drunk, drugged driving accidents may be preventable

LISA YOUNG

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

The circumstances of accidents caused by impaired driving may vary, but they share the characteristic that each injury and death caused by drunk or drugged driving is completely preventable.

During December, National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month, statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) provide a valuable perspective on the pervasiveness of impaired driving.

Every day, 36 people in the United States die and approximately 700 are injured in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver.

According to the NHTSA, about three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

In one year, more than 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. Large as this number is, it accounts for

less than 1 percent of the 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.

Drugs other than alcohol (such as marijuana and cocaine) are involved in about 18 percent of motor vehicle driver deaths. However, combining drug and alcohol use is common.

Male drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes are almost twice as likely as female drivers to be intoxicated with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent or greater. Driving with a 0.08 percent or higher BAC is illegal in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Soldiers are recognizing the dangers of drinking and driving, which is reflected in the accident numbers.

During fiscal year 2007, the number of Class A accidents involving alcohol-impaired Soldiers behind the wheel was cut in half from the previous year's 32, and only one motorcycle crash involved alcohol.

Reductions in alcohol-impaired driver accidents also occurred with sedans and trucks, with the figures dropping from 15 to 10 in sedans and five to none in trucks.

Everyone knows drinking and driving is illegal and dangerous for the person behind the wheel, but impaired drivers also pose a danger to passengers and others.

In a number of off-duty accidents, Soldiers have lost their lives when riding in cars driven by drunk drivers.

Reducing the incidence of impaired driving requires a community approach. NHTSA's primary message during the holiday season is “Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk—Designate a Sober Driver.”

What actions could a leader, battle buddy, friend or family member take to prevent 3D accidents? Steps can be taken year-round to ensure that everyone avoids driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Prevent future needless losses by following these

safety tips:

- Plan ahead by always designating a non-drinking driver before any party begins.

- If you see an impaired buddy about to cause himself or others harm, intervene by taking keys away. Watching out for your buddies, even when you aren't on duty, is part of the job description of “friend.”

- If hosting a party this holiday season, remind guests to designate their sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages and make sure all guests leave with a sober driver.

Taking these small steps can prevent the loss of a loved one to your family and to others.

For additional information, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/Motorvehiclesafety/Impaired_Driving/index.html.

(Editor's Note: Lisa Young is a health educator for U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.)

The doctor is in

Understanding your alcohol limits contributes to a merry, safe holiday season

DR. JACK SMITH

Tricare Management Activity

The holiday season is always full of buzz. From family gatherings to football parties, plenty of times and places to celebrate have arrived.

Unfortunately, the stresses of the holiday rush and the spirit of celebration combined with the many social gatherings can heighten the risk of unhealthy alcohol consumption for some. I would like to remind everyone during this holiday season that if you choose to drink alcohol as part of your celebrations, please drink responsibly.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research shows that between 2002 and 2006, nearly

40 percent of all fatalities in motor vehicle crashes during the Christmas and New Year holiday periods were alcohol related. In these accidents, at least one of the drivers was alcohol-impaired, as compared to about 28 percent of all fatalities during the rest of December.

It's all too easy to “over indulge” during the holidays and at celebratory events, but drinking to the point of intoxication (alcohol abuse) can ruin the celebration, since it carries with it the risk of injury, dependence and even death. Abuse includes heavy drinking, binge drinking or both.

Binge drinking is defined as drinking five or more drinks during a single occasion for men or four or more drinks during a single occasion for women.

Heavy drinking is defined as binge drinking once a week or more. However, if you are a woman who has more than one drink or a man who has more than two drinks daily on a regular basis, you may also be considered a heavy drinker.

Understanding the standard serving size for drinks is an easy way to monitor your alcohol consumption to reduce potential risks. In general, it's not the type of alcoholic drink, but rather the amount of alcohol consumed over a defined period of time that makes a difference.

In the United States, a standard drink is one that contains 0.6 ounces



Smith

(13.7 grams or 1.2 tablespoons) of pure alcohol. Generally, this amount of pure alcohol is found in the following:

- 12 ounces of regular beer or wine cooler,
- 8 ounces of malt liquor,
- 5 ounces of wine, or
- 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits or liquor (e.g., gin, rum, vodka, whiskey).

If you choose to use alcohol as part your celebrations this holiday season, please don't drink and drive. It's also a good idea to limit your drinks to no more than one per hour and three at most in an evening.

Getting sick, injured or worse, as a

result of overindulgence, is definitely not fun. Remember, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

The Department of Defense has developed a Web site and campaign highlighting the negative effects and risks of binge drinking at www.thatguy.com. It is a great place to find more info about alcohol.

Tricare's alcohol awareness Web page at tricare.mil/alcoholawareness is another great resource.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy and safe holiday season.

(Editor's Note: Dr. Jack Smith is the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for clinical and program policy and acting chief medical officer at Tricare Management Activity.)

Holidays often the most wonderful, stressful times of the year

BILL MOSSMAN
Staff Writer

ALIAMANU MILITARY RESERVATION — The holiday season is upon us, and for many, there is no better period to feel alive than during what entertainer Andy Williams once called “the most wonderful time of the year.”

In truth, however, the holidays can also be quite problematic for some, and possibly even dangerous for others. Stress levels tend to peak during the fall and winter months as people struggle to cope with, among other things, impossibly long lines at stores, congested parking and driving conditions, and a host of family- or job-related parties, where attendees often imbibe one too many cocktails.

The challenge becomes even greater for those in the military, where stress levels are apt to rise among spouses and children missing a deployed family member.

“People love the holidays because there’s a lot of fun to be had, but it can also be the most difficult time of the year for some because of the emotions that are involved,” said John Ahokovi, a prevention education specialist with Army Community Service (ACS), and someone who often conducts stress-related courses, here, and at other installations around Oahu.

To help those possibly dealing with holiday-re-

Feeling a bit stressed over the holidays?

Here are five tips, provided by the Canadian Mental Health Association, to help ease your worries.

- 1) Use relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation and massage.
- 2) Exercise. Physical activity is one of the most effective stress remedies around.
- 3) Watch your diet. Alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fats and tobacco all put a strain on your body’s ability to cope with stress. A diet with a balance of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and foods high in protein but low in fat, will help create optimum health.
- 4) Help others. Volunteer work can be an effective and satisfying stress reducer.
- 5) Get away for a while. Read a book, watch a movie, play a game, listen to music, or go on vacation. Leave yourself some time that’s just for you.

lated stress, Ahokovi encourages them to first recognize the signs, which include physical, mental, emotional and behavioral changes to their bodies.

“When we’re physically stressed, some of the symptoms include headaches and body aches,” he explained. “We also may be feeling a bit worn down and tired.”

Meanwhile, those experiencing mental fatigue will often exhibit poor judgment, react irrationally to advice, or simply do things out of character.

“These people will often seek to justify their actions,” Ahokovi said, “and if not controlled, they may develop a negative attitude that begins to affect their relationship with others.”

Stress-related victims also may ride what Ahokovi called “a range of emotions,” a spectrum that has disastrous consequences at one of its ends.

“They’ll be really sad one moment, and then the next moment, they’ll be really mad,” he explained. “They may even begin to entertain suicidal thoughts.”

Finally, he noted that behaviorally-stressed people tend to become aggressive, and often plunge themselves deeper into alcohol and/or drug abuse. “They reach the point where they don’t really care about anything or

anyone anymore,” Ahokovi explained.

To counter holiday stress, Ahokovi often encourages his students to first look for signs in others.

“We have what we call our ‘check-in policy,’” he explained. “We encourage people to call their families and friends, just to check in with them, see how they’re doing and ask if they need any help.”

“Sometimes, you’ll have young mothers with newborn children, and they need a hand,” Ahokovi continued. “This policy does that for them, and maybe prevents a case of Shaken Baby Syndrome.”

Ahokovi also encourages his students to limit their use of harmful substances, particularly alcohol, from Thanksgiving through New Year’s Day. “It’s OK to say no when you’re offered a drink at a party,” he said.

He also supports the concept of eating right and developing consistent sleeping patterns.

Above all, Ahokovi added, “Find ways to have fun. And find the things that are positive in your life, and focus in on what they are. In other words, be grateful for the things that you do have.”

For more information on upcoming stress-related classes, call ACS at 655-4227.



11/Today

Great Aloha Run Registration Discount

— In honor of the Great Aloha Run’s 26th year of running with aloha, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, in support of the Army Family Covenant, will sponsor a portion of the early entry military rate (individual category) for Blue Star Card (BSC) holders.

BSC holders can register for the run for only \$5, now through Dec. 17 (limited to the first 100 registrants).

The regular individual military entry fee is \$30.

The Great Aloha Run will take place Feb. 15, 2010, starting at the Aloha Tower and ending at the Aloha Stadium.

To register, bring a completed ap-

plication, the \$5 entry fee, and your valid Blue Star Card to either the Martinez Physical Fitness Center, Schofield Barracks, or the Fort Shafter Fitness Center.

For more details, call Jim Perry at 655-8006 or e-mail adrosor.perry@us.army.mil.

12/Saturday

Shoreline Fishing Sites Tour

— Tour favorite local fishing spots with Outdoor Recreation, Dec. 12, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Learn where the locals go to fish and what to catch. Cost is \$8, and round-trip transportation from Schofield is included. Call 655-0143.

13/Sunday

Honolulu Marathon Picnic

— Join Outdoor Recreation for a day of fun with a picnic at the Honolulu Marathon, Dec. 13, 4 a.m.-3 p.m. Come out to support a runner or spend time with the family.

Cost is \$49 for adults, \$14 for children. Round-trip transportation from Schofield is included. Call 655-0143.

19/Saturday

Hawaiian Canoe and Stand-Up Paddling

— Learn two sports that drive Hawaiians wild, outrigger canoeing and stand-up paddling, Dec. 19, 7 a.m.-noon. Cost is \$64 and includes round-trip transportation from Schofield Barracks. Call 655-0143.

Ongoing

Schofield Health and Fitness Center Closure

— The Schofield Barracks Health and Fitness Center (HFC), Building 582, is closed now through Jan. 2010 to replace the roof.

All classes and services have been relocated to the Martinez Physical Fitness Center (MPFC), Building 488. Call Linda Williams at 655-4804.

NFL Sunday Ticket

— Watch your favorite home football team live every weekend at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks, with the NFL Sunday ticket. Don’t miss the gridiron action. For more information, call 655-5698.



Send sports announcements to community@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.

13/Sunday

Hike Oahu

— Join the Hawaiian Trail & Mountain Club for an 11-mile advanced hike, Dec. 13, to the Koolau summit and Puu Kaamakua (family deity hill) at 2,681 feet.

Call Kevin English, 271-5125.

A \$3 donation is requested of non-members ages 18 and older; an adult must accompany children under 18. For more information and a calendar of future hikes, visit www.htmclub.org.

January

17/Sunday

Biathlon Series — Challenge the biathlete in you during the Waikiki

Swim Club 2009/2010 biathlon series at Magic Island/Ala Moana Beach Park. Each race starts at 7:30 a.m. and consists of a 5K run and a 1K swim.

Registration costs \$25 per individual, \$50 per team, per race. Entry fees include a T-shirt.

• Magic Island Biathlon, Jan. 17. Registration forms are due by Jan. 4.

• Valentine’s Day Biathlon, Feb. 14. Registration forms are due by Feb. 1.

For more information or to download registration forms, visit www.waikiki-swimclub.org.

Ongoing

Spouses Sailing Course

— Registration is now open for the Wet Hens nine-week basic sailing course, scheduled Thursdays, 9 a.m.-noon, beginning Jan. 7. The course meets at Hickam Harbor and costs \$80.

Interested military spouses should contact Sandi Hanlon at 450-3729 or Teresa Brown at 772-4114, for more information.