FIRST ARMY QUARTERLY FAMILY READINESS NEWSLETTER

"SEE FIRST – UNDERSTAND FIRST – ACT FIRST"

1 January 2007

Important Websites:

First Army:

http:www.first.army.mil

Fort McPherson:

www.mcpherson.army.mil

U.S. Department of Defense:

www.defenselink.mil

USO: www.USO.com/

American Red Cross:
www.redcross.org/

Army Family Liaison Offices:(AFLO):
www.wblo.org

National Military Family Association (NMFA):

www.nmfa.org

Army Family Team Building:

www.armyfamilyteambuilding.org

Military Child Education Coalition:

www.militarychild.org

Deployment Link:

www.deploymentlink.osd.mil

Civilian Personnel On Line (CPOL) :
www.cpol.army.mil

Army Emergency Relief: www.aerhq.org

Other websites

www.washingtonpost.com

AKO: https://www.us.army.mil/

www.irs.gov

www.americasupportsyou.mil

www.freddie.forscom.army.mil

www.vahealth.org/wic

http://www.bgcma.org/

www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/www_usn.nsf

http://www.first.army.mil/employmentInformation.htm

Bev's Corner

Dear Family Members,

Happy New Year!! Ending one year to start another can be a challenge for many of us. Some changes will cause us to be more proactive and some will need tweaking to meet the challenges of our families, but remember a change can be fun and exciting, too!

Although there are changes within our Army structure, I am convinced the caring attitudes about the need of families will not change. I certainly encourage you to call the First Army, G-1 Family Programs staff and find out how they can be of some assistance to you. Allow them to talk to you about the great programs and services that are in place throughout the Military regardless of where you live.

Family Readiness Group Leaders, we appreciate your role in assisting family members during mobilization and providing special activities to help families cope with the war.

Above all, let us not forget our brave Soldiers at war and our families left in the rear to carry on with family values and traditions. Please remember we are all serving on the same team and we should be there for each other.

From Russel and me, may God bless each and every one of you!

--Beverly Honoré

Family Programs Websites

First Army: www.First.Army.mil | **Family Programs: 404.469.3665**
Army: www.MyArmyLifeToo.com
Air Force: www.afcrossroads.com
Navy: www.NavyOneSource.com
Marines: www.usmc-mccs.org
Coast Guard: www.cgfamily.us

Relief Numbers and Links:

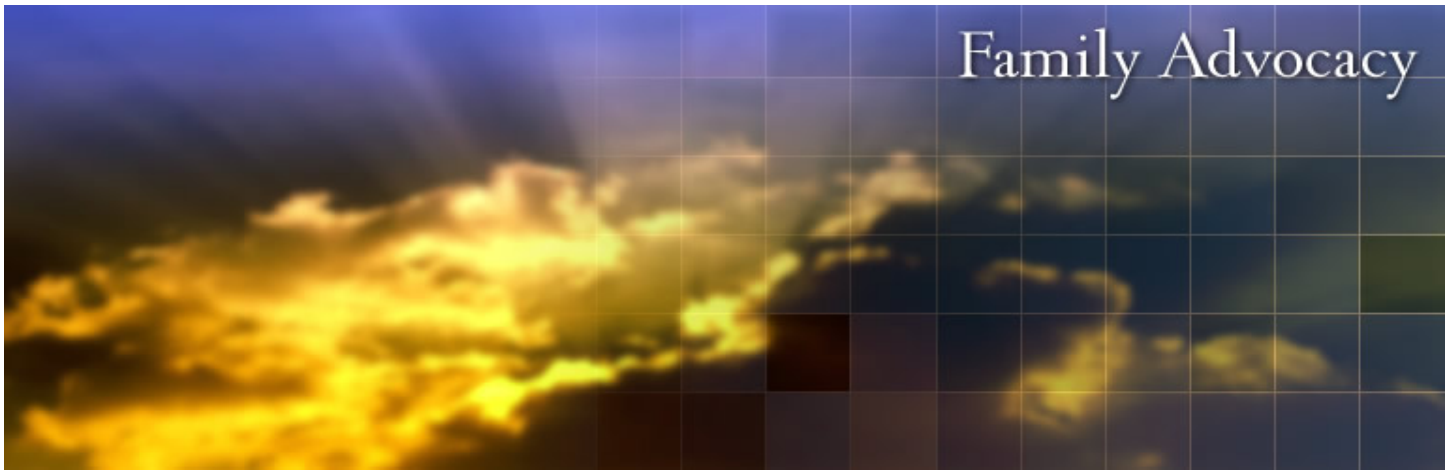
Organization/Service	Contact Information
American Red Cross	http://www.redcross.org/
MSARNG Emergency Operations Center 24 hrs	1-888-288-4898
Camp Shelby Family Programs Staff 24 hrs	Commercial 601.558.2284 or DSN 286-2284
Counseling Services	Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647
Army Recruiting Command's Operations Center 24 hrs	1-800-223-3735. Voice will ask for the extension you wish to reach. That is 6-0823 or 6-0824 (voice will tell you that you must use the 6-)
National Guard Bureau Family Program Hotline	1-888-777-7731
Army Reserve Family Program (IMA & IRR Soldiers)	1-866-345-8248

Left to right: Mrs. Puchy, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Honoré, and Mrs. Yingling.

Headquarters, First Army Senior Spouses attended the Spouse Orientation on 1 November 2006.

For information regarding First Army Family Programs, please contact: 404-469-3019 or DSN 797, larinza.stinnett@first.army.mil.

Tax season is quickly approaching! For current tips, information, forms, and no-cost e-filing instructions, visit the Internal Revenue Service web page at www.irs.gov.



TALKING AND WINNING TOGETHER

Though husbands and wives communicate with one another in a variety of ways, the fine art of talking together is probably the most important. On the business side of the relationship, talking is a way of sharing information, discussing options, and making decisions. On the personal side of the relationship, talking is a way of sharing experiences, encouraging one another, and communicating love. Talking together is also a way of negotiating or renegotiating the ground rules of the relationship. Usually those ground rules just develop on their own in the early stages of the relationship. We don't talk about them until they no longer work well or they cause a problem for one or both partners.

When stress is low, talking together is much easier. When stress is high, talking is much more difficult because strong feelings are swirling around while thunder threatens in the background. At those times the strongest impulse is to reduce the emotional overload as quickly as possible. If we follow that impulse we may: 1) change into argument mode and try to win; or 2) we may retreat and look for a safe place to hide until the storm is over. Retreating until strong feelings subside is a helpful tool when we need to calm ourselves down. However, it does not resolve the issue. To resolve the issue we need to engage with one another again in conversation about the issue until a resolution is reached. If partners do not engage again with one another you can be sure that the same storm will return on a regular schedule.

Arguing does not resolve anything any more than hiding. If arguing is carried to its natural conclusion, one person wins and one loses. Over time, most couples find this gets old. The winner is alone at the top; the loser is alone at the bottom and feels defeated. Of course, since probably all couples argue from time to time, I usually advise, "When you argue, make sure that your partner does not lose." That's when they look at me like I am from another planet. I explain, "You are not opponents; you are on the same team." I insist that they try it.

To resolve an issue, partners need to change into another kind of communication – one in which both partners feel like they are winning. They then will feel good about it and stay connected. The most distinctive feature of this communication is that it is heart to heart. You bring yourself to the conference table – your heart, your mind, your feelings, your love, and your dreams of how you want things to be. Here are some things that couples have told me helps them win together.

First, give something of yourself to your partner. It is easier and safer to tell your partner something about him or her, but that doesn't work very well. Try starting your statements with phrases like, "**I** notice, **I** think, **I** feel, **I** would like." This requires risk and generosity. Both are necessary in a loving relationship. Be

careful not to camouflage a major criticism in your statement. Your partner will hear it immediately, and then you will both go nowhere.

Second, slow the process down. This takes discipline and self control. When something really matters, people tend to speed up their speech and jump in on top of one another or talk on and on. If you are speaking, speak slowly and keep your statements brief. If you are listening, wait your turn to speak. You may want to sit down. It will help you relax and slow the pace. I told one couple to communicate for a week only by writing notes to each other. That really slowed things down. It became a game for them and before the end of the week they were laughing at themselves.

Third, make an understanding check. Now we are getting close to the heart, so be careful. Make sure you heard your partner correctly. To do that, simply ask, "What I understood you to say is," paraphrase what you heard and then ask, "Did I get it right?" Your partner will tell you if you are correct or not. Don't go on until you get a shared understanding of what was said. Remember this is a relationship of love. In a relationship of love people want very much to know their partner understands them. In this step, the mind and heart are bound together. The mind understands what you said. The heart says, "I understand you." When people feel understood they are 80% of the way to a solution. In fact, some couples find they don't need to go any farther than that. They are completely distracted by that moment of closeness. But, if they do, here are two more suggestions.

Fourth, brainstorm on solutions. Get as many options out there as you can think of. This is the mind-to-mind part and requires as much creative thinking as you can come up with.

Fifth, make the solution tentative. You can do this with most things. Try it for a week, a month, or for this year. Agree to talk about how things went at the end of the time period.

Finally, fix dinner together. Or, if you prefer, go out to eat and celebrate. I have had lots of couples tell me that following their late afternoon appointments with me they would go out to eat. After all, the children were already with the sitter and this was a good opportunity. Who knows? Maybe it was going out to eat together that made the difference anyway since they were talking together as they ate.

James W. Holiday
First Army Family Advocacy Program Manager

ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN

"Setting Standards of Living for a Transforming Army"

13-17 November 2006

Review the Army Family Action Plan Report Out and Issues on www.myarmylifetoo.com website.

CREATIVE PLAY

Video games have become increasingly popular in recent years and ever more realistic. The goal is for the player to feel like he or she is really in there as a participant in the action. However, long before video games ever came along, children were avid and frequent participants in worlds created by their own imaginations. Children love to pretend. As toddlers, children learn by imitating adults. As they grow older, they learn to create elaborate stories, making them up as they go. They may play house with roles and lines for everyone. They may become engineers, building skyscrapers with blocks, trucks and cranes. They may create their own version of CSI with cops and bad guys. What these all have in common is a merging of body, mind, and imagination. This creative play is a necessary part of healthy child development. The ability to imagine something different or better or greater is a necessary skill for the development of society and culture.

During the winter months, children may spend more time indoors. While TV and video games make effective baby sitters, creative play is a great alternative. Children will initiate creative play on their own, but there are many ways parents can get involved and encourage their children. Parents can help their children come up with a story line. They may help with props or costumes, which usually are simple things like boxes, chairs, scarves, hats, and the like. A room may need to be rearranged to accommodate the drama or parents may help with lighting to simulate night or day. It is important, however, that parents do not take over. The imaginative energy needs to come from the children. Parents need to remain in an assist role.

Younger children improvise their creative play as they go along. However, as children grow older, their dramas become more structured. They may have a scenario in mind ahead of time. They may act out favorite stories, a fairy tale, or something they have seen on TV. They may rehearse scenes. When they have it the way they want it, they may invite friends to come over and watch. Some children will decide they want to make their own movie and will set up the family movie camera. With a movie camera, children can extend their imagination. People can appear or disappear or change into the family dog. The movie then can be played later

for family and friends to watch and laugh together. The important thing in creative play is not the product; it is the process.

Some children, as they grow older, will develop an interest in live theater with a play, lines to learn, rehearsals to attend, a stage and a director. Parents can help by finding a place where their children can get involved and explore their interest. Many communities have a children's theater that produces plays of interest to children. Community theaters make use of mostly volunteers in the cast; and there are often roles for children. Many theaters also host drama classes for children as well as adults.

Live theater is a great way for children to develop social skills, self expression, confidence, and a life-long interest in the performing arts. It is also a great way to have fun.

James Holiday
First Army Family Programs

NEW INITIATIVES that you want to know about!!

Operation Ready. The United States Army Community and Family Service Center continues to develop and market new training material for all who work with families. Training material is developed based on expressed needs from the field. New material that is recently published or coming out soon includes FRG Leader Handbook, Rear Detachment Commander, Trauma in the Unit, Children and Deployment, Family Assistance Center, Reunion and Reintegration, and Soldier and Family Deployment Survival Guide.

Look for this Operation Ready material on www.myarmylifetoo.com or check with an installation Army Community Service Center.

Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG). The Virtual Family Readiness Group web system was launched Army-wide in February 2006, so it is not new. However, it is continually being upgraded and expanded based on developing needs from the field. It is especially designed to meet the needs of geographically dispersed National Guard, Reserve, and Active Duty Soldiers and their families. Commands can complete the application by going to www.armyfrg.org. Once authorized, DefenseWeb Technologies will work one-on-one with the command to establish a web site based on specified needs. Once all the content is submitted, the command can have a functional web site within two weeks. As of 8 December 2006, there were 573 sites operational; and 144 in development.

Partnerships. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) is leading the way in developing partnerships with many agencies across the country to develop a vast network of family support for National Guard and Reserve Soldiers and their families. The NGB currently has Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the following organizations and is constantly working on expanding this:

American Veterans (AMVETS) www.amvets.org
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) www.vfw.org
United Service Organization (USO) www.uso.org
Disabled American Veterans (DAV) www.dav.org

Because of this partnership initiative, NGB has full time VFW and AMVETS representatives on the NGB Family Program staff and more than $1.5 million in resources has been provided to Soldiers and families.

Here are some NGB facts and figures. The State Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) integrated network consists of 54 JFHQs with Family Program Directors (one per state and territory), 3,300 National Guard Armories, 88 Wing Family Program Coordinators, 331 Family Assistance Centers, 58 Family Readiness Assistants, 10,000 plus volunteers, 64 Child and Youth Specialists, 54 Transition Assistance Advisers and 54 Personnel Support Specialists.

This is your National Guard Bureau working for you! www.guardfamily.org

ON THE MOVE:
SOUTH CAROLINA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
218TH ENHANCED SEPARATE BRIGADE & STATEWIDE FRGS

The South Carolina Army National Guard's 218th Enhanced Separate Brigade and its subordinate units will begin the New Year preparing for deployment to Afghanistan. The Brigade will become the nucleus for Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Phoenix VI and will be responsible for training the Afghanistan National Army. CJTF Phoenix will accomplish its mission by embedding trainers at all levels of the Afghanistan National Army from the Kabul Military Training Center to the Corps, Brigade, Kandak, and Company levels. Past embedded programs have been so successful that CJTF Phoenix VI will assume additional responsibilities in the training of the Afghan National Police. Training Afghan Security Forces is critical to the stability of the world and to the reduction of the threat of terrorism. The program is also a critical part of the exit strategy for all U.S. military forces. The CJTF Phoenix VI mission will include Soldiers from across South Carolina as well as many other states, other components, and seven NATO countries.

The 218th Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Robert E. Livingston, answered the call to duty with the greatest concern for the safety and welfare of all Soldiers and with the solemn awareness of the mission's importance. When first alerted, BG Livingston conveyed in a letter to every member of his brigade, "… those of you who are deploying will train to do your mission with the utmost professionalism. While anything we do in life carries dangers, we will reduce your risk through hard, realistic training that will prepare you for the year long deployment."

Personal readiness for all Soldiers and their families is at the top of BG Livingston's mission essential task list (METL). With the help of the 263d AAMDC FRG leader, Michele Canchola, BG Livingston formed a statewide team of FRG leaders composed of representatives from the 218th Brigade, Troop Command, and Air Defense Artillery, Signal, and Field Artillery units. The task seemed unimaginable. The team was tasked to help prepare all of our Soldiers and families for deployment in the next two months, many of whom would be facing deployment for the first time. The team quickly attacked the challenge understanding that success hinged not based on where they stood, but in what direction they were moving.

And move they did! The FRG team carved out a vision that included the highest standards in briefing content, multiplying support resources through communities and partner agencies, and providing family-friendly briefings to reduce travel burdens while ensuring attendance. The team's creative and critical thinking produced new and innovative ideas producing phenomenal results including:

1. **A statewide team that grew from a dozen personnel to over sixty.** The team added community agencies as integral partners to the mission. Partners included dedicated representatives from the American Red Cross, Blue Star Moms, Operation Military Kids, the State Guard, the Military Officers Association of America; and briefing support from the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, community churches, and businesses.

2. **A completely overhauled deployment packet.** The updated packet provided Soldiers and families with a 'take home' understanding of readiness. Working in concert with the dedicated SCARNG Family Program office, the team reviewed every document and rewrote many of them to improve their readiness focus and readability. Hours of research resulted in updated (and tested) statewide Red Cross listings, and military family resources and benefits including updated TRICARE, legal, and financial information. The team indexed and organized the information into a briefing packet that is now used for all Guard deployments statewide.

3. **A revised briefing agenda focused on readiness tools**. The briefing agenda included a well organized commander presentation conveying commander care and standards. It also included a personal "deployment talk" that integrated the Chaplain as the presenter with "ready to go" and "ready to part" briefings.

4. **Multiple readiness briefings in different locations.** Nine readiness briefings were conducted across the state to accommodate family schedules, reduce family travel burdens, and increase opportunities for Soldiers and families to participate.

5. **Free childcare at every briefing.** Removing the burden of finding and paying for childcare removed potential barriers to participation and increased attendance at the readiness briefings. Childcare included educational activities that ranged from learning how to make ice cream, to making a personal picture ID card for the deploying parent to take overseas.

6. **Free lunch for all Soldiers and their families.** Combining lunch with first-class information and on-site child care helped participants understand the Commanding General's commitment to Soldiers and their families. As a result, families have a better sense their Soldiers will be well cared for while deployed.

7. **Prepare all Soldiers and families for deployment.** Through a concerted effort, Soldiers and their families are prepared for deployment months before departure.

Finally, the program was not static. As the team completed each briefing, the team took time to learn and improve before the next event. The SCARNG Statewide FRG team has evolved to a "Family of One" machine that continues to learn how to prepare and support Soldiers and families during this deployment. Lessons learned so far include:

1. **Command ownership of the FRG mission**. Command philosophy <u>is</u> a critical component of the FRG message. The FRG leader must be in sync with commanders at all levels.

2. **A statewide structure for the FRG.** When a mission involves different units from across the state, a statewide FRG structure is needed to unite unit FRGs not in a hierarchical structure, but in a collaborative structure that helps improve cohesiveness and quality of information/services.

3. **Commander communication in mailboxes**. A letter mailed to both deploying and non deploying brigade Soldiers conveying the Commander's message, a deployment checklist, and a briefing agenda and encouraging 100% readiness of all Soldiers and families as a combat multiplier.

4. **FRG weekly teleconferences.** Teleconferences have enabled FRG participation from all brigades, have broken down geographical barriers, reduced travel burdens, and enabled participation by families who otherwise might not have participated.

5. **Purpose driven, goal focused, open FRG meetings.** Such meetings fostered increased participation and new ideas. Participants are encouraged and even expected to come with ideas. Participants develop a sense of ownership and investment in the FRG mission.

6. **Including partner agencies as part of the team.** For example, the Red Cross, Blue Star Moms, the Military Officer Association of America, and Operation Military Kid representatives attend weekly FRG meetings.

7. **Tapping volunteer support from local government, businesses, organizations, churches, and groups.** For example, family lunches at nine briefings (and Soldiers' lunches at eight briefings) were provided at no cost to the government or FRG.

8. **Developing and training FRG leaders statewide.** All units statewide need FRG leaders who are knowledgeable and can reach out to Soldiers, families, and resources that are geographically separated.

9. **Embracing and involving extended family members.** Defining "family member" beyond spouse, and single Soldiers' family members improves support for the unit's mission and the FRG.

Under the direction and guidance of the ad hoc state FRG coordinator, Ms. Canchola, and the commander, BG Livingston, the SCARNG FRG team has and continues to develop leadership among FRG members, to provide support wherever and whenever needed, to establish strong and useful communications networks, to reach out to communities, institutions, and businesses, and to become a Total Force Family readiness asset. In a letter to Soldiers and families, BG Livingston communicated his compassion for his Soldiers and the importance of the mission:

> *"I thank you for your past service and your current preparation to further serve your country. If we do not stop the threat today and train emerging countries to protect themselves, we will face a far graver threat in the near future. We have an opportunity to serve in the tradition of the "Greatest Generation," those who served during World War II. I hope and pray we contain this threat early and change the world so our children and grandchildren may live in the peace we have enjoyed. May God bless you and your family, our State, our Nation, and our great brigade of Soldiers as we defend the freedom of all citizens."*

Winter Driving Safety Tips

Driving in Snow and Ice

The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. Don't go out until the snow plows and sanding trucks have had a chance to do their work, and allow yourself extra time to reach your destination.

If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure your car is prepared and that you know how to handle road conditions. It's helpful to practice winter driving techniques in a snowy, open parking lot so you're familiar with how your car handles. Consult your owner's manual for tips specific to your vehicle.

Driving Safely on Icy Roads

- Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.
- Keep your lights and windshield clean.
- Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills.
- Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.
- Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses, and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.
- Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.
- Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

If your rear wheels skid...

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If your rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
- If your rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering wheel toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get your vehicle completely under control.
- If you have standard brakes, pump them gently.
- If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS), do not pump the brakes. Apply steady pressure to the brakes. You will feel the brakes pulse -- this is normal.

If your front wheels skid...

- Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral, but don't try to steer immediately.
- As the wheels skid sideways, they will slow the vehicle and traction will return. As it does, steer in the direction you want to go. Then put the transmission in "drive" or release the clutch, and accelerate gently.

If you get stuck...

- Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper.
- Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
- Use a light touch on the gas to ease your car out.
- Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.
- Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel, or salt in the path of the wheels to help get traction.
- Try rocking the vehicle. (Check your owner's manual first -- it can damage the transmission on some vehicles). Shift from forward to reverse and back again. Each time you're in gear, give a light touch on the gas until the vehicle gets going.

FIRST ARMY

FAMILY READINESS QUARTERLY VTC WITH

MRS. HONORÉ -- 2007 SCHEDULE

10 JANUARY 2007, 1000-1200

Deployed and Mobilized Unit News

Under the direction of Lieutenant General Russel Honoré's First Army Family Readiness initiative, all mobilized and deployed units must have AKO and Military OneSource accessible (a link to AKO and Military OneSource must be present) family readiness websites.

Employment Information For Veterans

First Army Welcomes You to Our Employment Information Webpage!

Here you will find job opportunities and information for those who are looking to continue their military career or those that are interested in transitioning into a civilian career. This website will provide you with information and a list of employers from all around the country who are interested in providing employment opportunities for veterans. Please click on the link below.

http://www.first.army.mil/employmentInformation.htm

If you are a new employer and would like to provide employment opportunities for Army personnel transitioning to civilian careers, email your contact information to: AFKA-PA@first.army.mil. In your email please provide the following information: company name, point of contact name, point of contact title, mailing address, phone number, fax number, email address, and internet address (if applicable) to the website that displays veteran's employment information.

If you are military or civilian and looking for work, just follow the appropriate links to find employment opportunities. Military can explore Army JROTC, ROTC, and Operation Warrior Training Program. Civilians can explore Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP), Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2), Civilian Personnel on Line, USA Jobs, Veterans of Foreign Wars Employment Service, and various civilian employers.

CHAPLAIN'S BLESSING

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

RESOLUTIONS
Read Psalms 1

"Tis the season to make resolutions Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la."

By the time you read this newsletter article, you will have already gone through the tradition of making your resolutions for 2007. Some of the most popular resolutions deal with people trying to stop something – stop eating so much, stop smoking, stop drinking, stop carousing, etc. Other resolutions deal with self improvement – losing weight, reading more, spending more quality time with the loved ones, etc.

While you probably don't need any help making resolutions, the author of Psalms 1 suggests some good resolutions that definitely exceed the norm. The first suggestion is to choose your friends and associates wisely. Blessings are promised to those who avoid "the counsel of the wicked," "the way of sinners," and "the seat of mockers."

The second suggestion is to carefully scrutinize what you allow to give you "delight". The Psalmist suggests that you "choose to delight in God's word". Eugene Peterson, in The Message, uses the allusion of food to excite the senses by suggesting that you "chew on Scripture day and night." In other words, let God's word delight your senses just as eating your favorite food gives you delight.

Then, a final suggestion is for you to resolve to be like a mighty tree that is planted by a good source of nourishment. When you are properly nourished, your whole outlook on life is affected. You are more upbeat and positive. You strive for solutions rather than allow yourself to be stuck on problems. When you are properly nourished, the fruit of your labors seem especially sweet and satisfying.

So, as you make resolutions for the New Year, I hope you will consider some of the suggestions made in Psalms 1. You will be glad that you did.

We suggest that for the New Year, you read something devotional each day: a Psalms, Our Daily Bread, or something else of your choice.

Respectfully submitted,
CH (LTC) Melvin G. Lowry

FIRST ARMY

Family Programs Division

UPCOMING EVENTS

10 January 2007

Family Readiness VTC with Mrs. Honoré. This VTC provides the opportunity for mobilizing and deploying units to share information on Family Readiness Groups and families. Currently, there are 19 mobilizing units identified to participate.

6, 13, 20, and 27 (T) February 2007

Scheduled teleconferences with First Army East and West Family Programs

Web Resources

First Army Family Programs web site:
https://www.first.army.mil/family/index.asp

For more information please call: 404.469.3019
or email us directly at: larinza.stinnett@first.army.mil

OPERATION *New Life*

In May 2005, Mrs. Beverly Honoré, First U.S. Army Senior Spouse, launched a Family Readiness Program video teleconference (VTC) with Army National Guard and Army Reserve family care providers to hear first-hand how families are handling deployment and what care providers are doing to assist them. This new initiative (the first of its kind) has been a real success. The participation level of the Family Readiness VTC has grown from 5 units to 13 units within three months.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Mrs. Honoré conducted a teleconference with Camp Shelby Family Readiness Group (FRG) leaders. The information shared by Camp Shelby FRG included what is being accomplished to assist displaced families. Camp Shelby FRG requested First Army's support for six families (two families with homes totally destroyed and four families with homes in need of extreme repairs). A final number of displaced families has not yet been identified. Mrs. Honoré's involvement demonstrates how important families are to this command. Her goal is to have displaced military families tracked from the day a problem is identified until the quality of life has been reestablished.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Mrs. Honoré has been personally involved and is working diligently to ensure a notification process is in place regarding the status of each military family affected. Specifically, what happens after families are identified and how we will ensure these families are on the right track to reestablishing their quality of life. Through OPERATION NEW LIFE, families will be able to obtain information to help acquire a new perspective regarding family needs and get linked into community resources that will help to improve current situations.

First Army Operations Center Hotline: 1-800-496-6286
(staffed 24 hours a day)
Military One Source: www.MilitaryOneSource.com (user ID: army password: onesource) / 1-800-342-9647
To order Military One Source information directly to your facility, please call: 1-877-201-4253