

# Redstone Rocket

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## Post profile

School bus program in transition  
Page 4



## Soldier story



Ordnance brigade shares fellowship  
Page 8

## To your health



Medical issues strain family  
Page 12

## Around town

Retired NCO leads Scouts  
Page 16



## Win or lose

Unit teams take court  
Page 26



# Canines charm vets home residents

## Furry pets visit local veterans

By KARI HAWKINS  
Staff writer  
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Visitors at the Tut Fann Veterans Home rarely are of the four-legged variety.

But, thanks to the generosity of some dog owners from Athens, veterans at Tut Fann recently got to pet, hold, hug and talk to a few of "man's best friends."

The furry visitors garnered lots of different responses during their Dec. 9 visit with veterans, ranging from surprise to sheer joy with comments like "good dog" and "What a nice puppy."

For some, the gentle nature of a large Sable German shepherd known as Taka or

the alertness of a frisky Border collie mix known as Dixie brought back memories of growing up on a farm. For others, the cute expressions of a Yorkshire terrier named Miss Sophie and the excited, cuddly nature of a Lakeland terrier named Sailor were enough to make them smile and laugh, while others found amusement in just watching the dogs, including a beagle mix named Abby, ambling through the visiting rooms and hallways.

Leading the pack of dogs and their owners (Karen Davis, Sheila Wilbanks, Sharyl Grosco and Sharon Wittenauer), was Jamie Ward, the acting chief of the acquisition management division of the Lower Tier Project Office, who is also a dog trainer and competitive handler. Ward and the other owners are members of Love on a Leash Therapy K9s, an Athens-based organization affiliated with Therapy Dogs Inc.

"We take our dogs into nursing homes to visit the elderly and into schools to teach children about safety around dogs," Ward said.

"Today, we've all come out to support our veterans. I've worked on the Arsenal for 26 years. Even though I'm not a Soldier, I know what it means to support the Soldiers."

Coincidentally, the visit with veterans at Tut Fann fell on what would have been the 75th birthday of Ward's father, Army veteran Frank Siniard, who died earlier this year. She and Taka both wore a picture of Siniard to honor the special day.

"I have the Army to thank for my parents and for me being here," Ward said. "My mom met my dad before he went into the Army, but she didn't really care for him. The Army matured him so that when he came home my mom could fall in love with him. I know he was always proud that I work for and support the Army."

Taka, only 20 months old, is one of two Sable German shepherds that belong to Ward. While the other doesn't have the temperament to be a therapy dog, Ward knew

See **Canines** on page 3



Photo by Kari Hawkins

**ALL SMILES**— World War II veteran Douglas "Monroe" Mullican breaks out in a big smile as he talks to his canine visitors, Miss Sophie with her owner Sheila Banks to the left and Sailor with his owner Sharyl Grosco. The two therapy dogs visit nursing homes and schools as members of Love on a Leash Therapy K9s. They were among several dogs and their owners who visited veterans at the Tut Fann Veterans Home on Dec. 9.



Photo by Kari Hawkins

**CHRISTMAS VISIT**— Members of Love on a Leash, both dogs and their owners, pose for a holiday picture before visiting with veterans at the Tut Fann Veterans Home on Dec. 9. They are, from left, Jamie Ward of Lower Tier Project Office and her Sable German shepherd named Taka; Karen Davis and her Border Collie mix named Dixie; Sheila Wilbanks and her Yorkshire terrier named Miss Sophie; Sharyl Grosco and her Lakeland terrier named Sailor; and Sharon Wittenauer and her beagle mix named Abby.

## An open lane random survey

What's been your best Christmas ever?

By SKIP VAUGHN  
Rocket editor  
skip.vaughn@htimes.com



Pvt. Joshua Haseley  
Charlie Company  
"Being at home with family. I got a four-wheeler one year."

Pvt. Elliott Marcotte  
Charlie Company

"About three years ago, me and my father went up to Indiana to visit my uncle on my father's side of the family. And they had a big blizzard up there. I'm originally from Texas so I hadn't seen that much snow. And it was cool being with my father's side of the family for a change."



Carolyn Taylor  
Child Youth and School Services  
"When my grandparents were living, gathering at my grandparents' home with all my cousins when I was little. And opening gifts. We drew names. Opening gifts and having a big

meal. That's my favorite childhood Christmas. In front of a big fireplace, a big meal. I remember it like it was yesterday."

Jessica Martin  
School Age Services

"I would say 2005. That's when we went to Chicago and visited my son's paternal side of the family. We came back with a boat-load of gifts. And we got to see his great-grandparents. And we got to see Chicago. But every Christmas has been great since I've had my son. It actually gave me something to look forward to."



## Quote of the week

'A good conscience is a continual Christmas.'

— Benjamin Franklin

## Holiday wishes from Garrison

As the holiday season brings 2008 to a close, I offer my sincere thanks to our entire Team Redstone work force that makes Redstone Arsenal the Center of Excellence in every respect. It has been a very demanding and challenging year, yet you continue to exceed the highest levels of support provided to our men and women in uniform. Thank you for always ensuring mission readiness, 24/7 operational coverage and that due diligence remains at the forefront of our daily activities. We are blessed to have the finest citizens in our work force serving at Redstone Arsenal who are making immense contributions to our nation's war fight.

As we count our blessings and celebrate the holiday season with family and friends, we must never forget the sacrifices of our servicemembers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts around the globe. Their

See Wishes on page 7



Joe Ramirez/Photo Lab

**JOYOUS SEASON— Garrison commander Col. Bob Pastorelli and his wife, Anna, host the Garrison Holiday Ball on Dec. 5 at the Officers and Civilians Club.**

## Letters to the Editor

### Road bump awaits rework

I want to know when the abrupt bump (both ways) on a Patton Road bridge between Redstone and Martin is going to be fixed? This tire eater could eventually lead to an accident.

Of note: A similar situation was recently fixed on a Martin Road bridge just before going out Gate 1.

Phil Patterson  
SMDC

Editor's note: The Garrison provided the following response. "Let us begin by saying thank you for your interest in the well being and safety of all that travel the

roadways of Redstone Arsenal. Regarding your concern, the approaches to the Patton Road bridge located between Redstone and Martin Roads have been inspected and the Directorate of Public Works is aware of the current condition. There is slight degradation of the road surface at the transitions, however these are not considered unsafe for traffic at the posted speed limit. Rework of the approaches is included in our FY '09 annual road maintenance plan. Again, thank you for your interest. It's through your asking that we in the Garrison are made aware of opportunities to improve our service."

### Hats off to our recreation staff

As I wander around the Arsenal, looking at all the Soldiers in training marching up and down the streets, I can't help but think about my time in AIT stationed at Fort Meade, Md. Meade holds a special place in my heart and looking back at those days makes me happy. There, I met my future wife and I started my career in Army journalism. My life will never be the same as it was and I owe many of these good feelings to Meade and its surrounding area.

But also, as I look back, I remember many of my nights and weekends were spent going to the same mall, watching the same movies at the local theater and riding in the same taxi. Life would have been easier if we had a Morale Welfare and Recreation facility on post. Sure, to my knowledge, there is one there now, and that's great. But what I'm getting at is it would have been great to have something there then like the Soldiers here at Redstone Arsenal have.

Our MWR facility located right across Patton Road from the barracks is amazing – downright amazing. I have never seen a facility like this one care so much about what one Soldier thinks and jumping over mountains to make that same one Soldier happy. Whether it's a

See Recreation on page 7



Spc. Ryan Stroud

### Redstone Rocket has holiday break

The Redstone Rocket will celebrate the holidays by taking a two-week break Dec. 24 and Dec. 31. Our first publication next year is Jan. 7. We hope you enjoy the upcoming holiday season.

## Redstone Rocket

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# Getting to know you

By SKIP VAUGHN

Rocket editor

skip.vaughn@redstone.army.mil

**Name:** Shelly Williams

**Job:** Messenger/driver, Chugach

**Where do you call home?**

Florence, Ala.

**What do you like about your job?**

I like the ability to meet people and the freedom to move around the Arsenal and see all the things the Arsenal provides.

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**

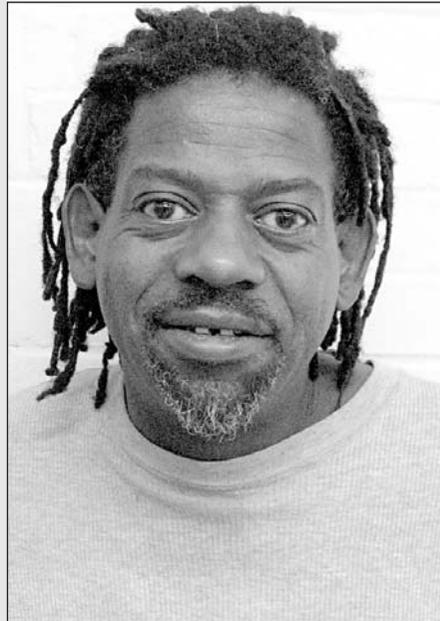
Music, photography and art

**What are your goals?**

My goal is to have a successful life and to be able to accomplish all of the different dreams I have set for myself.

**What's your favorite type of music?**

Jazz



# Crimes, accidents and other occurrences

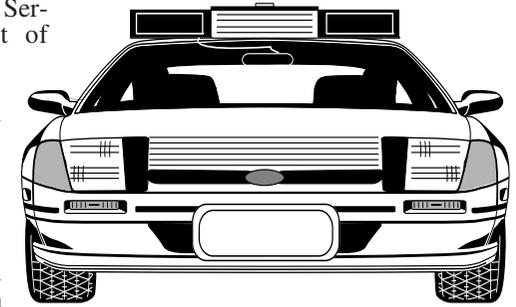
The Directorate of Emergency Services provided the following list of reported incidents:

**Dec. 4:** A driver requesting a visitor pass at Gate 10 had a suspended driver's license. It was further revealed that two arrest warrants were issued for him in Hoover. He received a violation notice and was later released to Hoover Police.

**Dec. 8:** A driver who approached Gate 1 asking for directions had a revoked driver's license. He was issued a violation notice and released.

**Dec. 10:** When a stranded motorist requested assistance, it was revealed that an arrest warrant had been issued by Robertsdale Police. A search of the subject's vehicle found a small amount of marijuana. The subject was issued a violation notice and later released to Robertsdale Police. Investigation continues by DES investigators.

**Dec. 10:** When a subject could not



produce a valid ID at Gate 9, it was revealed that an arrest warrant had been issued by Florence Police. The subject was later released to Florence Police.

**Traffic accidents reported:** seven without injury (including three involving deer strikes), none with injury.

**Violation notices issued:** 1 speeding, 1 suspended license, 1 revoked license, 1 possession of marijuana, 4 no driver's license, 1 improper tag.

## Therapy dogs make new friends at state veterans home

### Canines

continued from page 1

from the start that Taka — whose name means “hawk” in Japanese — would be a good dog in any situation.

“I’ve always wanted to work with a therapy dog. But I never had a dog with the right personality,” said Ward, who has raised several German shepherds. “When I got Taka, I realized he could do this. He is the most laid back male dog I’ve ever had. He’s very loving and very gentle. I can take him anywhere. I can bring him into an environment where there are lots of people and they can touch him without worry.”

To be a member of Love on a Leash, dogs must first pass a basic obedience class. In Athens, most therapy dogs go through training at House of Paws K9 Obedience Academy, where Ward teaches obedience classes. They then go through a 10-week therapy dog training class, and are required to pass the Canine Good Citizen Test provided by the American Kennel Clubs.

“They have to know how to walk beside you. They need to know the basic things like sit, down and heel. And they need to know to do more complicated things like being able to walk with their trainer when there are lots of distractions around, being able to ride in an elevator and go through automatic doors, being able to work with people around lots of different smells, and knowing to stop at a corner and wait for their trainer before continuing around the corner,” Ward said.

For Taka, one special training issue involved his keen interest in tennis balls as play toys. Often, in nursing homes, tennis balls are cut open and placed on the bottom of chair legs to make the chairs easier to slide on the floor. Ward had to make Taka understand that tennis balls on chair legs were not the kinds of tennis balls he should play with.

Training also prepares the dog's owner for the challenges of taking their dog into unknown environments and being able to connect with all kinds of different people.

“In training, you are not only training

the dogs, but the owners, too,” she said. “They need to know how to handle their dog in a stressful situation. No matter what, our first responsibility is to our dogs. As a handler, you have to have such a bond with your dog that you know what they are thinking and feeling, and the dog knows what you are thinking and feeling, too.”

Throughout their visit at Tut Fann, the dog owners paid close attention to their dogs, introducing them and encouraging interaction between their pets and the veterans.

“She wants to thank you for everything you’ve done. That’s why she’s wearing her patriotic bandana,” Sheila Wilbanks told a veteran as she introduced him to her Yorkshire terrier named Miss Sophie.

The motto for Love on a Leash is “sharing smiles and spreading joy.” When Ward and Taka make a therapy visit, Ward will leave behind a card that reads “You were visited today by Taka. He works for hugs and kisses, and brings comfort to those in need.”

“These dogs do amazing things and bring lots of joy to people,” Ward said.

Although their first visit to Tut Fann came

on a weekday, Ward and other Love on a Leash dog owners plan to make further visits on weekends because of their schedules.

“We all work, so visiting is better on the weekends,” she said. “Taka and I and other dog owners and their dogs will visit Tut Fann monthly. We want to commit to these veterans and show them we haven’t forgotten about them. Taka and I made lots of friends today and we plan to make many more friends at the veterans home.”

The dog owners were encouraged by the time they spent with the veterans.

“Everyone, including the dogs, had a wonderful time,” Ward said. “I had two of the handlers come up to me after the visit with tears in their eyes to tell me what a rewarding experience it was. That is what our group is all about.”

“It was a wonderful experience for us,” added dog owner Karen Davis. “I think all the dogs really did well today.”

*Editor's note: For more information about Love on a Leash and its work with veterans, call Jamie Ward at 233-2962 or 955-3371 or e-mail her at jamie.d.ward@us.army.mil or contact House of Paws K9 Obedience Academy at www.houseofpawsk9.com or 216-0945.*

# Redstone school bus operation nearing end

*Huntsville city contractor assuming responsibility to transport students*

By SKIP VAUGHN  
Rocket editor  
skip.vaughn@htimes.com

Redstone Arsenal is getting out of the school bus business.

The change began this school year when Huntsville started transporting Redstone youngsters who attend Columbia and New Century high schools. The next phase will begin Jan. 5, after the Christmas break, when the city will start transporting students to J.E. Williams Middle School.

Next year, the city will transport students to J.E. Williams Elementary.

Durham School Services is contracted by Huntsville to provide school bus transportation.

“Dec. 19 is the last day of school this year for the Williams Middle School and that’s when we



Photo by Skip Vaughn

**BECOMING EXTINCT— Redstone Arsenal will no longer have school buses when the city assumes responsibility for transporting students from on post beginning next school year.**

will stop our service (to that school),” Ray Boles, motor pool operations contracting officer’s representative for the Garrison Directorate of Logistics, said. “And Jan. 5 is when Durham will start their service (to Williams Middle).”

This will eliminate three Red-

stone buses that transport about 60 students to Williams Middle. “We’ve been told by Durham that their plan is to use two buses,” Boles said. Parents of Williams Middle students who have questions about the route, time or pickup location can call Durham

general manager Scott Gillies at 489-1025.

Six Redstone buses will continue to transport 113 students to Williams Elementary until the school year ends May 22.

But next year Durham will assume the entire responsibility.

“It wasn’t because Redstone hasn’t been doing a fantastic job,” Cal Densmore, the installation transportation officer in Garrison Directorate of Logistics, said. “It was decided between Redstone and the city that the city will start running the school bus operation and that’s what’s taking us out of the business.”

This eliminates a Garrison expense, which amounts to about \$1,000 per bus, excluding the bus drivers’ wages.

Redstone’s nine school buses, leased through the General Services Administration, are funded by the Garrison. The drivers work for Northrop Grumman.

“Some of (the drivers) will be going to work different places,”

said Carl Pack, the motor pool operations supervisor at the Garrison, who is employed by Northrop Grumman. “Some of them will be going to work for Durham, the other bus service that’s taking over. There’s a couple of them that are going to retire.”

“I think that the drivers here have done a fantastic job,” Boles said. “They’re real concerned about the youngsters’ safety. And they’ve gone the extra mile. We had one kid that fell asleep in the back seat (of a school bus a couple of years ago). They made all the effort to get the kid home. They’re always looking out for these kids. They’re concerned about their safety.”

Dewayne Baldwin, school liaison officer at Child Youth and School Services, said the transition for the school bus operation has been going well.

“It’s been relatively smooth,” Baldwin said, “to the point where I haven’t heard any complaints about it.”

# LOGSA has sendoff for retiring officer

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 LAWRENCE BONKOSKI  
*Logistics Support Activity*

Chief Warrant Officer 4 David Blackwell celebrated his 22-year career during his retirement ceremony Dec. 5 at the Logistics Support Activity.

He received the Legion of Merit medal and the Quartermaster Regimental Award, the Distinguished Order of Saint Martin.

"I've loved being a Soldier, loved putting on the uniform every morning," Blackwell said. "It's been a great career, but it's time to move forward to other challenges and spend more time with my family."

Blackwell served as deputy chief of operations for Corps/Theater Automated Data Processing Service Center in LOGSA. He will reside in Oklahoma.

"Mr. Blackwell is one of the elite officers who always looked for the hard jobs during his career — in Germany, at Fort Hood (Texas) and Fort Stewart (Georgia)," LOGSA commander Col. James Rentz said.

"His work was instrumental in keeping up material readiness for the Army and taking care of fellow Soldiers. They just don't get better than Mr. Blackwell."

Blackwell joined the Army in 1987 as material storage and handling specialist. He attended Warrant Officer Candidate School in 1993 to serve as a supply systems technician warrant officer. His overseas tours included Korea, Germany,

Saudi Arabia, Hawaii and Bosnia. He received the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), and the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait). (LOGSA release)



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 5 Wade Lovorn  
**ALL THE BEST— Retiring Chief Warrant Officer 4 David Blackwell receives a commander's coin from LOGSA commander Col. James Rentz on Dec. 5 at the Logistics Support Activity. Blackwell earlier received the Legion of Merit and the Distinguished Order of Saint Martin at his retirement ceremony.**

# Dempsey in command at TRADOC

By CARROLL KIM  
*TRADOC News Service*

FORT MONROE, Va. — Gen. Martin Dempsey assumed command Dec. 8 from Gen. William Wallace at the Training and Doctrine Command headquarters on Fort Monroe.

"General Marty Dempsey — with his experience commanding U.S. troops in Baghdad, overseeing the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces and his leadership of CENTCOM — is uniquely suited to the helm of this organization at this critical time," said Secretary of Defense Robert Gates during the TRADOC change-of-command ceremony at Fort Monroe's Continental Park.

Dempsey, an armor officer commissioned in 1974 at West Point, most recently served as the deputy commanding general of U.S. Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. From March to October, he served as CENTCOM's acting commander. He holds advanced degrees from the National Defense University, the Command and General Staff College and Duke University. A scholar and teacher alike, Dempsey also taught as an instructor and assistant professor in the English department at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.



**Gen. Martin Dempsey**

# Coalition forces kill attacker, capture 18 in Iraq

WASHINGTON – Coalition forces killed an armed attacker and detained 18 suspected terrorists while targeting al-Qaida in Iraq leadership and bombing networks in Iraq Dec. 9-10.

South of Baghdad, coalition forces Dec. 10 targeted a suspected bomb facilitator who reportedly was in a Salman Pak residence. When they called for the building's occupants to surrender, a man at first complied, but then went back inside the house and attempted to engage forces with an AK-47 assault rifle. Forces fired on the armed man, killing him. The man later was identified as the wanted terrorist. Forces also detained seven suspected terrorists.

Also Dec. 10, in Samarra, northwest of Baghdad, coalition forces detained six suspected terrorists believed to be linked to a regional al-Qaida in Iraq leader. During the operation, forces seized multiple rifles and a pipe bomb.

Elsewhere, coalition forces detained three suspects Dec. 9 while targeting an al-Qaida in Iraq leader in Beiji, south of Mosul. Also Dec. 9, southwest of Baghdad, forces detained two wanted men suspected of bomb facilitation in the Fallujah

area and of ties to al-Qaida in Iraq leadership in Anbar province.

In other operations Dec. 9: Iraqi and Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers seized a cache north of Baghdad that included 10 TNT booster charges. Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers seized a cache in West Rashid that included 10 rocket-propelled grenades with propellant, 14 hand grenades and a 120 mm mortar.

A "Sons of Iraq" citizen security group member found a weapons cache east of Baghdad in Nissan village that included a 125 mm round, a 115 mm round, a 106 mm round and a 100 mm round. The man turned the munitions over to Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers.

Iraqi soldiers turned over ordnance collected throughout the week from Baghdad's Sadr City district to Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers. The soldiers destroyed the munitions that included 12 mortars, a fire extinguisher, a 75 mm rocket and two 40 mm projectiles.

*Editor's note: American Forces Press Service compiled this article from Multinational Force Iraq and Multinational Corps Iraq news releases.*

## ■ Garrison commander sends holiday greetings

### Wishes

continued from page 2

determination and selfless service are paramount in preserving the freedom and peace we enjoy every day. Our armed forces are the best in the world and are our leading ambassadors of goodwill and peace. Remember in your thoughts and prayers our deployed servicemembers, civilians and contractors who have voluntarily put their lives at risk. We honor all those who have answered the call of duty and are spending the holiday season far away from home and separated from their families.

During these final weeks of the year, be sure to take time for yourselves and your families. Spend time with your loved ones and remember good friends.

Calendar year 2009 will be busy and exciting, so prepare now for the road ahead. I sincerely look forward to seeing and working with you all in the new year. My wife, Anna, and I wish you and your families a joyous and safe holiday season and a very special New Year. May God bless each and every one of you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Col. Bob Pastorelli**  
Garrison commander

## ■ Staff members do extra to serve troops

### Recreation

continued from page 2

videogame or movie, our MWR will go miles to have the latest and greatest things for our Soldiers in training here to enjoy.

On many occasions I have ventured into the facility, needing answers to mundane questions and have been greeted by the warmest of responses. Members of the MWR facility bending over backward to accommodate my needs is the same response I receive every time I need something from them. It's just amazing.

Also, I have often entered the facility only to find staff members who are off duty still working or coming in to work

early because of something pertaining to a Soldier's need. It might be to bring in the latest movie or to schedule a role-playing game session; these persons are there in hope of making our Soldiers' lives a little easier.

As those of us who have served know, going through rigorous training, which makes up Advanced Individual Training, can be a trying time. I can't thank the members of the MWR enough for taking the time to make sure our Soldiers are happy and taken care of.

Thank you for what you do for us.

**Spc. Ryan Stroud**  
59th Ordnance Brigade  
Public Affairs

# Prayer breakfast motivates brigade Soldiers

*Retired lieutenant colonel recalls close call in combat*

By Spc. RYAN STROUD  
59th Ordnance Brigade Public Affairs

“The Army is one of the easiest places to slip on your faith. Back in my day, we were working six days a week so sleeping in those extra couple of hours Sunday morning was fantastic. But remember, just as easy as it was to forget about your religion, it’s just as easy to get up and follow it,” said retired Lt. Col. Lawrence Bayer, the guest speaker for the 59th Ordnance Brigade Prayer Breakfast held

Dec. 2 at the Officers and Civilians Club.

Members of 59th, including the trainee Soldiers of 832nd Ordnance Battalion, gathered for food, laughter, stories and most importantly – fellowship.

“We had a prayer breakfast this morning to bring Soldiers together to talk about faith,” Staff Sgt. Derrick Harper, a member of 59th’s ministry team, said. “The (trainee Soldiers here) need to hear about faith especially before they deploy. They need to know that there really is someone watching over them in the heat of battle.

“This prayer breakfast also helps the permanent party Soldiers see the ministry team in action,” he said. “They get to know that we are here for them. If the Soldiers need anything, they can come over to our offices and check us out. We provide counseling, retreats for both married couples and single Soldiers, suicide awareness training, and many other services to help our Soldier community.”

After breakfast plates were scraped clean, Bayer spoke to the Soldiers.

“(While in Vietnam) as we headed out the gate towards the foreign legion post, my jeep was ambushed,” Bayer said. “There was seven Viet Cong soldiers attacking, three on one side of the road, four on the other. They were firing at us from 30 feet, point-blank range, hitting the jeep as we drove through.

“My driver was a Cambodian, whose name was Chong. In the back seat was my senior adviser, Sgt. Clark. We went through that fusillade of bullets without any



Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud

**REFLECTION—** Soldiers take a moment to pray during the 59th Ordnance Brigade Prayer Breakfast held Dec. 2 at the Officers and Civilians Club.

of us getting a scratch on us except for my driver who received a cut on his ear from glass flying out of the windshield,” Bayer continued.

“Three-fourths of a mile further down the road, we crashed into a police barricade. We got out of the jeep, ran into the police station to let them know what happened,” he said. “When we dragged the jeep back to our compound, my sergeant, Sgt. Clark, counted 27 bullet holes in the jeep. All the tires were shot out; the radiator and windshield were shot out. That jeep was full of holes, but none of us had a single hole in them. God was riding

shotgun with us that particular day.”

Bayer quieted down for a moment, scenes of the jeep running through most Soldiers’ minds.

“Whether or not you believe God is with you, whether or not you’re searching for God, God is always going to be with you,” he said. “All you have to do is recognize that God is watching over you. You may feel alone, abandoned, that no one is out there watching over you, but that’s not true. God is watching over you.”

The crowd applauded and Bayer took his seat. The Soldiers looked motivated and moved by

his lesson.

“I feel pretty good right now. The speech was nice and spiritually motivating,” Pvt. Christopher Morris of Bravo Company said. “I am hoping those here who heard the message being given will find God. I hope this motivated them to do so.”

“It’s great for these Soldiers to get the chance to exercise their right to free religion,” Harper said. “We want these Soldiers to know that faith does play a major part in accomplishing the mission. We hope they enjoyed themselves this morning and we see them at future prayer breakfasts.”



Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud

**GUEST SPEAKER—** Retired Lt. Col. Lawrence Bayer gives his lesson of faith to the Soldiers by telling stories from his experiences in Vietnam.

# Garrison kicks off holiday season in style

*Holiday ball draws crowd*

The Garrison really knows how to throw a party. An estimated 275 people attended the Garrison Holiday Ball on Dec. 5 at the Officers and Civilians Club. The event was hosted by Garrison commander Col. Bob Pastorelli and his wife, Anna.



Joe Ramirez/Photo Lab

**OPENING CEREMONY**— Soldiers from the installation color guard march in to post the flags during the holiday ball.



Joe Ramirez/Photo Lab

**STEPPING OUT**— Gents led their ladies to the dance floor and danced the night away after the formal portion of the Garrison Holiday Ball.



Joe Ramirez/Photo Lab

**DECK THE HALLS**— Attendees of the Garrison Holiday Ball fill the seats at the Officers and Civilians Club Dec. 5.

# Mother of 13 brings new meaning to 'Army strong'

By Spc. LONI KINGSTON  
Army News Service

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND,  
Md. — Under normal circumstances, a

Soldier graduating from Advanced Individual Training doesn't attract the attention of many people besides friends and family.

Pfc. Siobhan Healy, though, is a 39-

year-old mother of 13 children.

Healy not only graduated at the top of her class Dec. 5, the 63B Wheeled Vehicle Mechanics Course at the Ordnance Center and School's Edgewood area on Aberdeen Proving Ground — she also scored 350 points on her physical fitness test.

"I started working out about six months before I went to basic training," she said. "I was afraid that the younger people would outrun me."

A German native, Healy has wanted to join the military since age 18, said her husband Christopher Healy, but was unable to serve in the German military due to her gender and her 6-foot-1-inch stature.

At 39, Healy thought that the opportunity to join the military had passed her by until a Maryland Army National Guard recruiter informed her otherwise, she said.

Healy said that although she was excited at the prospect of fulfilling a lifelong

dream to become a Soldier, she was a little apprehensive of being deployed and away from her children.

Ultimately, due to her appreciation and her desire to give back to her adoptive country, she decided to go for it.

Healy declined any bonuses because she didn't want to sign up for the money; she did it for her country, she said.

"It was the right thing to do for me," she said.

The 200th Military Police Company, a Maryland National Guard unit in Catonsville, Md., just welcomed Healy, its newest Soldier, to their team.

Healy is not finished in her endeavors, though. She also wishes to become a police officer for the Baltimore City Police Department and is earning a degree in criminal justice.

*Editor's note: Spc. Loni Kingston serves with the Maryland National Guard.*



Photo by Spc. Loni Kingston

**FULL HOUSE**— Pfc. Siobhan Healy with her husband Christopher Healy and 12 of her 13 children pose for a family picture after her graduation from Advanced Individual Training, Edgewood, Md.

## Security assistance workers share holiday cheer

More than 200 people celebrated the holidays with a party Dec. 10 at the Ledges Golf Clubhouse. The event was hosted by AMCOM's Security Assistance Management Directorate.

The festivities culminated with the announcement of the inaugural Gerald E. Williams Security Assistance Person of the Year Award. SAMD director Dr. Tom Pieplow presented the award to Maria Taylor, a directorate serving her second tour in Afghanistan. Her husband, Gary, accepted the honor on her behalf.

The Gerald E. Williams Security Assistance Person of the Year Award was developed to recognize individuals within the command who have demonstrated excellence and professionalism in support of SAMD/foreign military sales and who have made notable contributions to the community. The award process began in early October with canvassing for

nominees. A six-member panel, consisting of management, non-management and contractor employees, evaluated all submissions.

The award is named after a recently retired SAMD division chief, who had a distinguished career in security assistance. Williams made introductory remarks prior to the presentation of certificates of recognition to all this year's nominees by SAMD deputy director Dan Parker.

Attendees represented all aspects of foreign military sales and included personnel from SAMD, the Army Security Assistance Command, program executive offices, foreign liaison officers, and contractor personnel. Entertainment was provided by the Lee High School choral group "The Trouveres," the Huntsville Police Department singers "The Blue Notes," and the Nomadic Tapestry Dance Studio. (SAMD release)

# National Guard celebrates 372nd birthday

*Oldest part of armed forces has growing mission in war*

By KARI HAWKINS

Staff writer

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In a year when the Alabama Army National Guard has gone through one of its most significant transformations, the commander of a state theater-level headquarters said Alabama's Guard is ready for its dual mission in support of the state's governor and the nation's president.

Maj. Gen. Joe Harkey, commander of the Alabama Army National Guard's 167th Theater Sustainment Command, provided an outline of the Guard's history and its future at a National Guard 372nd birthday breakfast sponsored by the Redstone-Huntsville Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army on Friday at the Heritage Club.

Harkey said the state activated 41 units, deactivated 54 units and converted another 44 units during its transformation from "a strategic reserve to an operational force" that provides flexibility in its dual mission to provide states with units trained and equipped to protect life and property, and to provide the nation units trained, equipped and ready to defend the U.S. and its interests anywhere in the world.

"Our fellow countrymen rely on us. We are ready. We are the Guard," said Harkey, who oversees more than 400 personnel in the 167th in their mission to provide operational logistical command and control.

The National Guard's integral role in today's "Army of one" is evident, he said, in the promotion of National Guard Gen. Craig McKinley, who is now a four-star general. McKinley is the chief of the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va.,



Photo by Kari Hawkins

**HONORING NEW MAYOR— Alabama Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Joe Harkey presents newly elected Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle with a certificate making him an honorary colonel in the Alabama National Guard during a breakfast Dec. 12 honoring the National Guard's 372nd birthday. The birthday breakfast is a tradition started last year by the Redstone-Huntsville Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army.**

and the senior uniformed National Guard officer in charge of developing policies and advising the secretaries and chiefs of staff of the Army and the Air Force concerning all National Guard issues.

The National Guard is the oldest component of the armed forces. It was formed in 1636, well before the United States became a nation, in the Massachusetts Bay colonies when colonists, responsible for their own defense, drew on English military tradition and organized male citi-

zens into militias.

"Since then, the National Guard has participated in every war and every conflict this nation has had," Harkey said.

During the Spanish-American War, more than 70 percent of the nation's fighting force came from the National Guard. In World War I, the National Guard provided eight divisions of Soldiers that made up 40 percent of the combat divisions in France. Many of those divisions were considered superior or excellent by the German army.

The Guard nearly doubled in size during World War II, when it provided 19 divisions of Soldiers. Guard units were among the first to deploy overseas and the first to fight.

About 138,000 National Guard Soldiers were called to defend the nation during the Korean War. During the Vietnam War, almost 23,000 National Guardsmen were called to active duty, with about 8,700 deploying to Vietnam.

In today's modern warfare, 63,000 National Guard Soldiers participated in Operation Desert Storm. In 2005, more than 50 percent of combat forces deployed in the Global War on Terrorism were National Guardsmen. In addition, during that year, the National Guard provided

50,000 troops to support Hurricane Rita and Katrina security and cleanup efforts.

"We have a large presence, a large mission," Harkey said. "We are also a big 'go to' force in homeland security."

Currently, there are 11,300 National Guard Soldiers and 2,200 National Guard Airmen in Alabama, with more than 360,000 National Guard Soldiers throughout the nation. Alabama has deployed more than 12,000 Soldiers in the Global War on Terrorism and another 2,200 are getting ready to mobilize in the next year.

Following his comments, Harkey presented newly elected Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle with a proclamation designating him as an honorary colonel of the Alabama National Guard. In return, Battle named Dec. 13, the National Guard's birthday, as National Guard Day and as AUSA Chapter Day in Huntsville.

"Celebrating the National Guard's birthday is a fine tradition that's now in its second year," Mike Howell, president of the local AUSA chapter, told those attending the birthday breakfast. "This is all about the Army being one Army, one fight."

Retired Brig. Gen. Bob Drolet told the group that expanding AUSA to include the reserve components of the National Guard and Army Reserves and keeping the AUSA mission focused on supporting Soldiers and their families is what has kept AUSA a viable organization and has helped the Redstone-Huntsville Chapter remain the nation's best chapter for five years in a row.

"It's only right and fitting to keep the focus on Soldiers and families who carry the burden of the Global War on Terrorism," he said.

Also, at the breakfast, Vietnam POW and retired Air Force Col. Leo Thorsness spoke about the importance of family support networks in wartime and introduced his new book "Surviving Hell."

Thorsness said conditions for Vietnam POWs improved drastically once POW families organized themselves and began putting pressure on the North Vietnamese to stop torturing American servicemembers and to give a full account of all POWs. It is the strength of families that keeps servicemembers strong when they are faced with war.

"You are providing a better war-fighting machine if you are taking care of the families at home," he said.

Redstone Arsenal engineer Laura Ayers also talked at the breakfast about the publication of the Reintegration Action Plan for servicemembers available through Veterans Affairs and online at [www.AlabamaReturningVeterans.org](http://www.AlabamaReturningVeterans.org).

## Army awards \$10M training support contract

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology, a business unit of General Dynamics, has been awarded a \$9.9 million, 18 month contract from the Training and Doctrine Command to support the Ordnance Mechanical Maintenance School at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Through this contract, General Dynamics will provide Army-qualified, TRADOC-certified instructors to train Advanced Individual Training Soldiers and professional development students on mechanical maintenance on tanks, small arms weapons, wheeled and tracked vehicles, trucks, generators, air conditioners and other equipment.

"Winning this contract again demonstrates our commitment to providing training services and strengthens our place in the training market," said Zannie Smith, senior vice president of General Dynamics Information Technology's Army Solutions Division. "We will continue to support our Army customer with quality instructors to accomplish a very challenging mission." (General Dynamics release)

# Blessings abound for family facing health crisis

## Seeks donations for medical bills

By **KARI HAWKINS**  
Staff writer  
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Rick Gray's faith has been tested to its very core.

And, yet, he counts his blessings every day. He's thankful to God for his wife Lisa, his twin daughters Hannah and Lauren, his church and community, and his job with AMCOM's Integrated Material Management Center that now allows him to work from home.

Those blessings mean a lot to a man who is struggling with incurable stage 4 Renal Cell Carcinoma.

But that's not the only health challenge faced by Gray and his family.

Since the birth of their twins in 1999, Gray and his wife have been consumed with the financial, emotional and physical costs of caring for one daughter's health condition while at the same time providing a strong family environment where both daughters have flourished. Their

daughters, who are nearly 10 years old, are happy, intelligent and secure in their parents' love, despite having to cope daily with the problems associated with daughter Lauren's hereditary muscle and joint disease called Arthrogryposis.

"I have a strong faith that God will bring us through this," Gray said. "But I've gotten through the past three months on more than my faith. My drive is to make sure Lauren's needs are met if something ever happens to me. That's my job as a daddy."

Recently, the Gray family has reached out to the Huntsville community for assistance with their dwindling financial situation. They have asked for help to pay the mounting medical bills associated with the purchase of Lauren's new \$37,000 wheelchair. They also hope to receive help with the purchase of a \$10,000 automatic track lift system for Lauren's use in her bedroom and bathroom, and a new \$30,000 handicap accessible van with a hydraulic lift.

So far, with the help of the community, they have been able to purchase Lauren's new wheelchair, which has given her much greater mobility and even allows her to stand up for the pledge of allegiance

at school. Their daughters' school – Mt. Carmel Elementary – raised \$3,000 toward the wheelchair. The recent Tuba Christmas concert at the Huntsville Museum of Art raised just over \$1,300 for Lauren's medical expenses, and nationally syndicated radio personality Sean Hannity, whose talk radio career began in Athens, has donated \$5,000.

Businesses, such as Southern Mobility in Madison, and Beauty Mart and Park Supply in Huntsville have made contributions to Lauren's needs. In addition, Magical Moments Portrait Studio in Lacey's

Spring is planning a two-day event where 20 percent of all revenues will go to the Gray family. Members of their church – First Baptist in Meridianville – have taken up several love offerings for the Gray family, and continue to help with things like shopping, meals and yard work. Recently, the Gray family has also made contact with an organization called Circle of Hope that assists in finding resources and other sources of support for families with disabled children.

See **Blessings** on page 13



Photo by Kari Hawkins

**IN WHEELCHAIR**— Lauren Gray, at home with her dad Rick, mom Lisa and twin sister Hannah, is living a happy, productive life in the face of serious health problems thanks to the united efforts of her family, friends, church members and the community. Recent community fund-raising efforts have helped pay for her new \$37,000 wheelchair.

# Blessings

continued from page 12

“We’ve just been overwhelmed by the support we’ve received,” Gray said.

The Gray family is hoping others – including AMCOM employees – will make donations to a special “Lauren Gray” bank account they have set up at Redstone Federal Credit Union.

“Lisa and I do have good insurance. But insurance paid \$21,000 of the \$37,000 we needed for Lauren’s wheelchair. The rest was paid for with donations,” Gray said.

“In nine years, we have spent thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars for supplies and things we’ve needed for Lauren’s care. The insurance paid a lot, but there was a lot we had to pay, too. One thing you realize with a child with a disability is that everything is expensive.”

Gray said the cost of medical equipment goes up about 20 percent every year, and the pediatric equipment is more expensive than adult equipment.

“I’ve worked a lot of overtime to help pay for what Lauren needs. Because we both have good jobs, we don’t qualify for any other type of assistance,” said Gray, who has worked as a DoD civilian for 23 years and whose wife works for a defense contractor.

Because of her condition, Lauren spends most of her time in a wheelchair, and undergoes weekly physical, occupational and speech therapy. Despite her health problems, she excels in the classroom, where she has a wheelchair desk, and is on the fourth-grade Honor Roll. Lauren easily communicates and socializes with classmates, friends and family,

and is a soccer goalie and cheerleader in Upward church programs.

“We try to get her to do as much for herself as she can,” Lisa Gray said. “She’s in regular classes, so she has the same homework all the other kids have. She can do some writing. She’s actually amazed her therapist that she can write at all.”

Lauren has very poor finger and hand control, and every joint in her body is affected by her disease. She needs help with things that involve motor skills, such as getting in and out of her wheelchair, getting dressed, and standing and walking. As she grows up, the need increases for an automatic track lift system so Lauren can move independently from her bedroom to her bathroom, and back again.

“Since I’ve had radiation, my bones are not strong enough to lift my daughter,” Gray said. “She weighs 80 pounds, and I can’t lift her anymore. I’ve dropped her twice in the shower.”

Lauren has lived a better and longer life than doctors predicted when she was born.

“When she was three days old and the doctors said she was going to die, I fell to my knees and prayed ‘God, take everything I’ve got – my house, my cars. I’ll spend every dollar on Lauren. Just spare her life.’ I promised God she would have her needs met,” Gray recalled.

Doctors also said Lauren would never be able to feed herself and would always have to rely on a feeding tube, that she would never be able to sit up on her own, that she wouldn’t have a normal life.

“They were telling me all the things she can’t do. But I wanted to show them all the things she could do,” Lisa Gray said. “At eight months, she sat up on her own. She actually grew ball joints, something doctors have never seen develop

outside the womb. That was our first miracle with her. We’ve had many others.”

But, those miracles haven’t come without a struggle. Most of Lauren’s first year of life was spent in the hospital or at home with 24-hour nursing care, with the bill escalating as high as \$300,000. Lauren has lived through 12 hospital stays and seven major surgeries.

Three years ago, the Gray family moved into a new home designed with Lauren’s disability in mind. The doors are wide enough to allow passage of a wheelchair and a bathroom sink is at wheelchair level, among other things.

“Lisa designed the inside of the house with Lauren in mind. We are always thinking about what Lauren will need as an adult. We asked adults in wheelchairs what our house would need. Because of the design, Lauren can go into any room in the house,” Gray said.

The Gray family also needs to replace an old handicap accessible van that continues to cost them money to maintain.

“The van has been a money pit since we’ve gotten it. We’ve spent \$7,000 on the hydraulics and they’re still not right. The transmission is also starting to mess up,” Gray said.

As Gray’s own health worsens, he worries more about the future for his entire family. He was diagnosed with Renal Cell Carcinoma (kidney cancer) in 2004.

“They took one of my kidneys out. Then, in 2007, they found it in my lungs and they took out as much as they could,”

said Gray, who started working from home in October 2007. “Six months ago, they found it in my bones. It’s gone from my hips to my spine to the base of my skull. We’re trying to stop it right now where it is. We’re pulling out all the stops.”

That means daily radiation, chemotherapy and IV bone strengthening treatments at Clearview Cancer Institute in Huntsville. Those treatments leave Gray with severe headaches. In January, doctors will do an MRI to see if they have stopped the cancer’s progression to Gray’s brain.

But Gray often shrugs off his worries and his ill feelings to spend quality time with his daughters.

“I’m so proud of both of them. They are smart and they are respectful. We’ve taught them that the only things that matter are God, family and education. Everything else will take care of itself,” Gray said.

“We do what we have to do to help Lauren. We persevere. As long as we stick together as a family, everything will work out. We may never know the why of everything, but the Lord will provide a way through every circumstance.”

*Editor’s note: Donations for Lauren’s care can be made to the “Lauren Gray” account at any Redstone Federal Credit Union. Donations can also be made by calling RFCU at 1-800-234-1234 or 837-6110 or by mail at 220 Wynn Dr., Huntsville, 35893. For details on the Magical Moments Portrait Studio fund-raiser, call 498-0265 or 656-1113.*

# Improving the bottom line for pilot comfort

## Company devises new seat cushion

The development of the OH-58D Helicopter seat cushion was inspired by a large number of Army pilots suffering back pain caused by flying extensive hours. Extended missions required during Iraqi Freedom emphasized this problem.

This pain could have an adverse impact on operational readiness, crew effectiveness and flight safety during flight missions. Poor posture during flight has been a contributing factor in pilot lower back pain. Logistics Management Engineering Inc. has been contracted to develop a seat cushion that improves comfort and reduces incidence of lower back pain without adversely affecting airworthiness.

A survey of materials identified foams for the seat cushions which best satisfy lower back, thigh and lumbar support during extended missions. Laboratory testing of foams was conducted to better compare the final candidates and aided in determining optimal thickness and density to be used for the bottom cushion. A fit and function evaluation determined appropriate size range of adjustments required for each postural/comfort aid. Prototype cushions were designed, fabricated and used in dynamic crash tests and in Army conducted evaluations.



Courtesy photo

**KIOWAS— The OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter dates back to the Vietnam War and continues with extensive flying hours in the global war on terrorism. In November, the OH-58D Program Manager selected the LME seat cushion as the replacement seat cushion for all the OH-58D aircraft in the Army inventory.**

The fatigue reducing proprietary “slow-flow” comfort foam conforms to body contours for uniform weight and pressure distribution. It withstands impact, repeated shocks, and constant vibration. The viscoelastic chemistry of

the foam and its controlled cell structure result in impact energy absorption of approximately 90 percent. The lower back and thigh support bladders are constructed of urethane-coated nylon cloth used in life preserver bladders. The degree of infla-

tion is controlled by the aircrew member by use of separate hand pumps to personalize the firmness and support of the seat cushions. Optional cushion covers are made of sheepskin/wool and all waterproof materials for use in a high exposure environment.

The LME seat cushion meets crewmember needs by providing: inflatable lower back support (lumbar pad) enhances flight posture; lower back support can be personalized by adjusting inflation level and up or down on seat back; dryness and breathability are achieved by sheepskin covers; contoured seat bottom sides give improved lateral support; multi-layered seat bottom foam construction provides vibration dampening; internal, inflatable thigh support bolsters legs and improves flight posture.

The LME OH-58D seat cushion has been environmentally tested in accordance with Military Standard 810F. Testing included altitude, high temperature, low temperature, temperature shock, solar radiation, blowing rain, humidity, fungus, salt fog, blowing dust, and blowing sand. In November, the OH-58D Program Manager selected the LME seat cushion as the replacement seat cushion for all the OH-58D aircraft in the Army inventory. (*Aviation Engineering Directorate/Camber Corp. release*)

# Project office has precise procurement plans

Industry proposals sought for alternative warhead

By DAN O'BOYLE  
For the Rocket

As 2008 winds down and '09 ramps up, the Precision Fires Rocket and Missile Systems Project Office is living up to its name — Precision.

“We are ceasing the procurement of Dual-Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions after deliveries of work in progress,” project manager Col. Dave Rice said. “We are also pursuing technologies that will meet the



Courtesy photo

**TARGET PROSECUTION— An M 31, Guided Multiple Launch Rocket heads downrange following launch from a High Mobility Artillery System.**

requirement to engage broadly dispersed area targets.”

An Army Configuration Steering Board has resulted in

the release of a request for proposal for two or more competing contractors to provide Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System

Alternative Warhead technology solutions.

“The procurement ceasing action lines up with the DoD policy on cluster munitions and unintended harm to civilians,” Rice said. “And the warhead action means that we expect to receive proposals next month, with a Milestone A decision before the end of March.”

Then a 20-month prototyping effort with two contractors begins.

“The intent is to put those two competing warheads in 10 to 12 rockets, shooting and measuring them at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico,” Rice

said. “Then we would select the best product for engineering and manufacturing.”

The Alternative Warhead Initiative is a materiel change. That is, rocket motor and the guidance control section remain the same.

“We will take out the 400 DPICM grenades from the payload section, replacing them with the technologies that will produce the desired effects on area targets,” Rice said. “Earlier we canvassed industry, finding that 19 modeling and simulation technologies existed. So we have a pretty good idea of what the industrial capabilities are.”

## CID seeking candidates to become special agents

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, commonly known as CID, is currently seeking qualified applicants to become highly-trained criminal investigators.

Special agents are responsible for investigating felony-level crime of Army interest, conducting protective-service operations, and working with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to solve

crime and combat terrorism.

Agents receive training at the U.S. Army Military Police School and advanced training in specialized investigative disciplines. Selected agents receive advanced training at the FBI National Academy, Metropolitan Police Academy at Scotland Yard, DoD Polygraph Institute, and the Canadian Police College. Agents also have the opportunity to pursue a master's degree in forensic science

from George Washington University.

To qualify, applicants must be a U.S. citizen, at least age 21, be an E-5, sergeant (non-promotable), with at least two years but not more than 10 years time in service, have an ST score of 107 or higher (ST of 110 if tested before Jan. 2, 2002), have at least 60 college credit hours from an accredited institution (waiver of up to half of this prerequisite may be considered if favorably endorsed by

the local CID office), have a physical profile 222221 or higher, with normal color vision and no record of mental or emotional disorders, a minimum of one year of military police experience or two years of civilian police experience (a waiver of this prerequisite may be considered if favorably endorsed by the local CID office).

Applicants must be able to speak and write clearly, have suitable char-

acter established by a Single Scope Background Investigation leading to a Top Secret clearance, no record of unsatisfactory credit and no civil court or court-martial convictions, and lastly, be able to complete 60 months of service obligation upon completion of the Apprentice Special Agent Course.

To apply or for more information, visit [www.cid.army.mil](http://www.cid.army.mil). (CID release)

## Retired first sergeant cited for Boy Scout work

*Veterans coalition presents lifetime achievement award*

By **KARI HAWKINS**

Staff writer

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Retired 1st Sgt. Albert "Al" Farrar wasn't at the Veterans Day Dinner when his name was called out as the recipient of a lifetime achievement award presented by the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition.

It wasn't that he didn't want to be present to receive such a prestigious award. If he had known about the award, which he didn't, he would have rearranged his schedule to make sure he was there.

But, without realizing the momentous occasion he was missing, Farrar went about taking care of a previous engagement he had scheduled with a few young men. While other veterans and community leaders were dining at the Von Braun Center's North Hall, Farrar was going over the details of a flag retirement ceremony that members of Boy Scout Troop 400 would be involved in on Veterans Day.



Photo by Kari Hawkins

**LOOKING AHEAD— Retired 1st Sgt. Al Farrar reviews plans for a supporter's appreciation dinner hosted by Boy Scout Troop 400 at the Albert F. Farrar Sr. Boy Scout Hut.**

"What I enjoy doing is changing the character in boys. I'm not doing this to get recognition," said Farrar, who has been

the Scoutmaster for Troop 400 since it was started in 1988.

"Plaques collect dust. My satisfaction is to see a boy grow into a responsible and productive young man. I want to do this for the rest of my life."

Farrar, 73, received the lifetime achievement award for his nearly 30 years of work as a Boy Scout leader. He is a retired Soldier who stumbled into Scouting thanks to his own son's desire to be a Boy Scout.

"I took my son fishing and he didn't like that. I paid for golf lessons and tennis lessons for my son, and he didn't like doing those either," Farrar said.

"And then he got into a Scout troop. He really loved Scouting. So, I switched all my habits over to what he enjoyed."

Farrar's son, Albert Jr., was a member of Boy Scout Troop 102, and Farrar was its Scoutmaster. After his son graduated from high school and went on to West Point, Farrar left Scouting. But it wasn't long before he was asked to be a unit commissioner for Boy Scouts.

"Troop 400 was a unit that just happened to be in my area. But at that time it was just a troop on paper," he said. "So, I volun-

teered to be its Scoutmaster. It gave me an opportunity to make a difference in some kids' lives who really, really needed it."

Boy Scout Troop 400 is an interesting mix of about 85 boys from throughout Huntsville. Most of the boys come from the city's public housing projects, such as Council Court, Butler Terrace, Northwood, Lincoln and Lakeside. Every Saturday, they come together at the Albert F. Farrar Sr. Boy Scout Hut on Dallas Avenue in downtown Huntsville.

"The number of boys we have is a 'moving number.' Our boys come from transient neighborhoods," Farrar said. "People come into public housing and then they get out. Boys come into our program when they live here. We can't kick them out when they move on. Most of them have their roots in public housing."

The troop provides many activities for its members. Besides working on merit badges and advancing in rank, the boys go on camping trips and snow skiing, and they participate in several community events, including Flag Day ceremonies at Veterans Memorial Park. The troop

See **Leader** on page 17

# Leader

continued from page 16

operates on a \$75,000 a year budget, and has two 15-passenger vans and a 19-passenger bus that pick up boys from various public housing neighborhoods to transport to meetings and events.

"We're blessed. We get an annual grant from the Housing Authority because we provide youth development activities. The rest of our money comes from parking concessions during events at the Von Braun Center and during Panoply and Big Spring Jam," he said.

"The one thing about being a Scout troop is everybody wants to help you, especially in low income neighborhoods. People are very generous."

Though their official meetings are on Saturdays, Farrar sees many of his Scouts throughout the week. The Boy Scout Hut is open Monday through Friday from 3-7 p.m. for Scouts and any other neighborhood children who need a safe haven or a place to get homework help.

"We want our boys to live by the Boy Scout oath and law," Farrar said. "We want them to take advantage of educational opportunities. We want them to realize their future depends on how well they do in school. We work hard to get them to see the value of a good education."

Scouts participate in monthly essay writing contests on issues affecting their education, behavior and expectations. They share leadership positions in the troop, often vying every six months to serve in a position. Farrar has six retired veterans who help with the troop.

"They are goal oriented and compassionate about what they do. They are making a difference in these boys' lives," he said.

However, it can be difficult at times to see the difference they are making.

"We are dealing with boys who have a value system that is turned upside down," Farrar said. "They think 'If I don't get caught, then it's OK.' They will get the paperwork and do all the requirements for Eagle Scout (the highest ranking) and then they will go out and steal a car. They meet all the requirements for Eagle Scout except the ethical part. They don't have the right values."

In the 20 years he's been volunteering with Troop 400, there have only been two boys who have made Eagle Scout. The boys' value systems along with the lack of parental support and good parental role models are roadblocks in achieving the highly respected Eagle rank.

There was a time when that bothered Farrar. But he has come to realize that it is up to the boys, not their Scout leaders, to make the right choices for a better life.

"I had a preacher tell me once 'I deliver the message and the Lord converts the heart.' The best job you can do is present the program to the boys and hope they will respond," Farrar said. "As leaders, we can't think we failed because the kid failed. We stress values hard, but the boys have to decide to accept those values and live by those values. And you can't make Eagle Scout if you can't live by the Boy Scout law."

Farrar's goal is not necessarily to have more Eagle Scouts come out of Troop 400. His goal is to help the troop's members grow into productive young men with values.

"We really stress that they need to look down the road and look around and see where they are headed," he said. "As a Scoutmaster, I'm about the only man in most of their lives. I talk positive to them about the possibilities they have."

"I try to point them toward not making the same mistakes of their mother or father. I tell them their opportunities are better. I tell them 'Don't let the situation you are in now affect your future. Don't let where you are drag you down. You've got in your hands the opportunity to make yourself better.'"

Farrar had a much different childhood than the boys of Troop 400. He grew up in a household where there were two parents who stressed education and opportunity. They gave their son boundaries and taught him values.

But, like the boys he works with today, Farrar also had to decide for himself what his future would be. Farrar joined the Army in 1954, after realizing his parent's dream for him to become a dentist just wasn't what he wanted to do.

"A big influence on me was that I grew up during World War II," he said. "My hometown in Virginia was on the route of a lot of military trucks. I'd see those trucks and think 'One day I'm going to be on that truck.' My parents had a different idea. After a year at Virginia State College, I made up my mind to do it my own way. I had no idea of staying there. My mind was made up."

Farrar was assigned to the Army's nuclear weapons program. His focus was on Redstone and Pershing missiles, with

assignments in Germany and at Fort Sill, Okla., and Redstone Arsenal. His last assignment during his 23-year military career was as an instructor at the Arsenal, where he received instructor of the month several times.

"The whole Army career prepared me for this type of thing," Farrar said, referring to Scouting. "As an instructor, I taught boys every day, not only about missiles but also about life skills. The Army gave me an opportunity to learn and to teach and to lead men."

After retiring as a first sergeant, Farrar spent another 17 years working as a DoD civilian on Redstone Arsenal, where he worked in computer maintenance and test equipment. Besides Scouting and various community activities, Farrar spends his retirement days with his wife, Verline. They have two daughters, Verlinda and Cordai, who live in Atlanta, and their son Albert Jr. is a major in the Army.

This year, as part of a Veterans Day program at Huntsville Middle School, Farrar revisited his old Army days. He was asked by many of the boys in his troop who attend Huntsville Middle to wear his uniform for the program.

"I hadn't been in an Army uniform in 30 years," he said. "I pulled my uniform out of a closet and took it to the tailor. I asked if he could make it fit and he just laughed at me. But he put in a panel in the back and I could get the jacket on."

"I wore it to the program. The boys were real proud of me. They followed me around the school like I was Santa Claus."



Photo by Skip Vaughn

## Office gifts

Members of the Sparkman Management Office invited Marines to their luncheon Dec. 9 and gave to Toys for Tots. From left are Staff Sgt. Maurice Cottman and Gunnery Sgt. Reese Jordan, both of the Marine Reserve Center on South Memorial Parkway, who accepted the gifts on behalf of Toys for Tots; Bran Skipper of Phoenix Service; SMO's Angie Foutch and Rick Manis, the Sparkman building manager; and Linda Readus, Secretary of the General Staff.

# Operation Christmas Bear draws record attendance

*Fifth annual event entertains families*

By **SOPIA BLEDSOE**  
For the Rocket

When it comes to celebrating the holidays with families of deployed servicemembers, Army civilians and contractors, no committee does it quite like Operation Christmas Bear.

Sponsored by the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition and on its fifth year, Operation Christmas Bear drew a record crowd Dec. 6 at the Cahaba Shrine Temple in Huntsville. Almost 500 bears were given to children of the deployed.

Every Christmas year, the event supports families of deployed active, Guard and Reserve Soldiers, Army civilians and contractors in North Alabama. The veterans coalition consists of several non-profit organizations such as the Association of the U.S. Army, Warrant Officers Association and the Military Order of World Wars, all of which support the military.

"Every year our crowd gets bigger and the event better," organizer John Perry said. Last year's numbers topped at 400,



**HERE COMES SANTA—** Santa Claus arrives at the Cahaba Shrine Temple, accompanied by all the favorite cartoon characters, to celebrate Operation Christmas Bear. The event is sponsored by the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition.

Photo by Sofia Bledsoe

and this year more active duty Soldiers were able to come and enjoy the activities with their families.

"Some parents literally have tears in their eyes," Perry said of attendees through the years. "Before, you were on your own. Communities, organizations and

the Army have increasingly improved their support of the military family, which gives Soldiers a big boost of morale."

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Stevens of the 59th Ordnance Brigade said he was not able to spend Christmas with his family last year because he was

deployed overseas. He found out about Operation Christmas Bear through stories and photos of the event from his wife Kristy and daughter Skylar. He then asked, "Can I volunteer next year?" They've come to the event ever since and think it is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the hol-

idays with other military families. He also believes it is helpful for military families whose spouses are deployed to have a program in place for them, especially during the holidays. "It just helps you get through the rough patches during Christmas," he said.

Even organizations such as MOWW, in its first year of supporting the event, have reaped the benefits of Operation Christmas Bear by being able to improve on their Youth Leadership program.

"Working with other kids is a whole different experience," said Linda Hernandez, 15, a volunteer with MOWW's Youth Leadership. "As a kid helping another kid, coming from someone who is in the military, is a great learning experience for me." She and her parents recently moved from Fort Bragg, N.C., to Huntsville.

A favorite part of Operation Christmas Bear is the opportunity to take a photo with Santa and to be able to tell him what you want for Christmas. This year, the Santa photo lane was headed by the local AUSA chapter volunteers who ensured each child received a Christmas Bear and walked away knowing Santa will give them exactly what they want for Christmas.

## Missile Defense Agency commissions von Braun display

*Tribute to space pioneer slated for facility foyer*

By **LEAH GARTON**  
MDA Shield editor

Efforts are under way to enhance the foyer of Missile Defense Agency's Von Braun II facility with a display dedicated to Dr. Wernher von Braun himself.

Von Braun had served as the preeminent rocket engineer of the 20th century and is generally regarded as the father of the United States space program.

A planning committee co-chaired by Lt. Col. Doug Oyler, deputy chief of staff for MDA South, and Harvey Player, assistant deputy for agency operations South, commissioned the project.

"The display will enhance the look of the foyer and also provide employees and guests entering the building with a biography of the person that our facility is named after," MDA historian

Spero Zervos said.

Local artist Everett Cox is creating a 2-foot tall bronze-like bust of von Braun that will sit on a 4-foot high pedestal. Cox possesses fine art degrees from Auburn University and the University of Georgia. He also teaches as an adjunct instructor at the University of Alabama-Huntsville, at Calhoun Community College, and in his studio at Lowe Mill.

The foyer display will also include a desk used by von Braun between 1974 and 1977 while serving as the first president, and later chairman, of the National Space Institute (now called the National Space Society). This nonprofit space advocacy group helped to educate and maintain the public's support for the space program.

A 14-by-8 wall graphic with captions will detail some of the most significant contributions that von Braun had made to the fields of rocketry and space travel. The display is scheduled for completion in February.



Courtesy photo

**ART IN PROGRESS—** Local artist Everett Cox is creating this 2-foot tall bronze-like bust of Dr. Wernher von Braun that will sit on a 4-foot high pedestal.



Photo by Skip Vaughn

## When it rains

Heavy rainfall caused some flooding Dec. 10 on Redstone Arsenal. Umbrellas were commonplace that day at the Sparkman Center.

# Challenger Bingo getting facelift

## Facility renovation done by new year

By KELLEY LANE-SIVLEY  
Staff writer  
kelleyqa@bellsouth.net

Everyone has a Christmas list. The staff and patrons of Challenger Bingo get the pleasure of checking theirs off item by item. Santa is bringing them a freshly remodeled facility for Christmas.

"We've needed this for a while," Challenger Bingo manager Connie Arnold said. "We're finally getting it and it's almost done."

While they have managed to remain open for the duration of the remodel, work has forced them to cut back their hours. Previously open six days a week, hours of operation had been

shortened to five days to allow contractors more time to work.

"We've always been closed Mondays," Arnold said. "We decided to close Tuesdays as well so they would have two consecutive days to work uninterrupted every week."

Work on the facility is scheduled to be completed during the holidays, allowing for a full reopening Jan. 6. To celebrate, Arnold said they are giving a gift to those who come to play that evening.

"We're going to give them two free packs that night," she said. "The cost on that would be \$27."

The remodel makes for an upgrade to the bingo experience. New sound equipment and boards have been put in. The register and checkout areas have new counters and cabinets being

installed. The smoking area is now a separate room with glass windows and its own bingo board.

"Before, we just had a partition," Arnold said. "Now it's much more professional."

The new carpet and flooring, along with a fresh coat of paint, gives the entire place a richer feel, reminiscent of a classic Las Vegas casino. Adding even more to the feeling of an upscale hall, Arnold said they have increased the number of handheld and electronic bingo games. They also have a VIP program where players accrue points for merchandise.

"It's our big incentive program," she said. "As a VIP, you get our monthly mailings. You get a card to scan in the computerized game or you can have your receipts added to your total. Once you get 700 points, you can cash that in for \$56.75 worth of merchandise."

While all of the bingo games available are a hit, Arnold expects the newest addition, Bingo 24, to continue to rise in popularity once they are open at full strength again. Unlike other games where players have a minimum cost for cards, the Bingo 24 electronic game allows players to decide how much to spend. Even the smallest amounts can yield big results.

"One dollar can win up to \$6,000," Arnold said.

For those who like things the old-fashioned way, paper cards and ink daubers are still a staple. Challenger Bingo pays out an average of \$2,000 every night for those games, not including two progressive jackpots that may be won. A percentage of each night's sales go into the two jackpots until they reach \$900. Once they are at least that much, they can be won.



Photo by Kelley Lane-Sivley

**BRAND NEW— Challenger Bingo manager Connie Arnold tries some of the new equipment installed as part of the Challenger remodel.**

Because most players like to use multiple packs of cards simultaneously, each player needs a little elbow room. Existing tables don't allow multiple players to sit comfortably at every table. New tables will be longer and wider, letting four players to sit together while providing a comfortable playing area.

"We've ordered new chairs, too," Arnold said. "The new ones are similar to the existing chairs, but with a soft vinyl seat and back so that they are easier to clean."

Bingo games will continue nightly for the rest of the week. Today through Friday, cards go on sale at 5:15 p.m. and bingo

will begin at 6:45. This weekend, cards will go on sale at 12:15 p.m., with bingo beginning at 1:45. As a Christmas special, players will receive two free packs, door prizes and a free snack from the Challenger snack bar.

Bingo will be closed from Monday until after New Year's so that Santa and his elves can finish all of the goodies for the facility. Arnold hopes all of the old faces will come back to see their new one once the remodel is complete. She also looks forward to welcoming new players.

"We have a lot of fun," she said. "We also have some nice prizes. Come have a good time and win something."



Courtesy photo

## Troop visit

**Rep. Robert Aderholt, left, returned Dec. 7 from a congressional delegation trip to Africa and Southeast Asia. During the trip, he met with Alabama troops in Afghanistan and held diplomatic meetings with leaders of various African nations about the development of AFRICOM. The members traveling with Aderholt were Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma and Reps. Jeff Miller of Florida and Randy Neugebauer of Texas.**



File photo

## Confirmed for 3rd star

Maj. Gen. Jim Pillsbury's nomination for his third star was confirmed Dec. 8. The president had nominated him for appointment to the rank of lieutenant general and assignment as deputy commanding general/chief of staff for Army Materiel Command, Fort Belvoir, Va. He is serving as deputy chief of staff for logistics and operations at AMC. "Becky and I are humbled by this nomination, confirmation and promotion to lieutenant general," said Pillsbury, Redstone's former commander. "We are proud to continue serving Soldiers and their families. Our nation is at war and I can think of nowhere else I would rather be than serving in the United States Army and, more specifically, here in the Army Materiel Command."

# Research command hails new leader during ceremony

Maj. Gen. Izzo joins RDECOM

By STEVE ROCHETTE  
RDECOM Public Affairs

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The Research Development and Engineering Command ushered in new leadership at Aberdeen Proving Ground during a change of command ceremony Dec. 5 at the installation's National Guard Armory.

Maj. Gen. Paul Izzo assumed command of RDECOM from Maj. Gen. Fred D. Robinson, who spent 18 months leading the organization. As the senior mission commander at Aberdeen, Izzo also fills the installation's senior leadership role.

Gen. Benjamin Griffin, former commander of the Army Materiel Command, hosted the ceremony and presented Izzo with the unit colors. Griffin said Izzo is well-equipped to lead RDECOM.

"He's the right man at the right place at the right time," Griffin said. "He knows more about lifecycle management commands and support to the Soldier than any commander that I know in the field today."

Griffin expressed his gratitude to Robinson for emphasizing his war fighters' focus upon the strong technology foundation at RDECOM.

"General Robinson and his wife Reva have been a fantastic command team here and have taken RDECOM to a new level," he said.

Robinson, who retired after the formal change of command ceremony, said the Army has taken significant strides throughout his career.

"I stand here with enormous pride – not self pride but pride in being part of an Army for the last 32 years that has accepted unbelievable challenges and moved forward at every hurdle," he said.

Robinson said leading RDECOM was a tremendous experience because of the



Photo by Sean Kief

**IN CHARGE—** Maj. Gen. Paul Izzo, the new commander of the Research Development and Engineering Command, makes remarks during the change of command ceremony. Izzo assumed command from Maj. Gen. Fred. D. Robinson.

people associated with the command.

"All of you have touched this poor Soldier's life and that of his family. No matter where we are, y'all will always be in our hearts," he said.

He then addressed Izzo, stating that he would lead an organization with a dedicated work force.

"They give all of themselves without concern for their own person – they build, they team, they explore and all for the Soldier of today and tomorrow," he said. "Our Army is in great hands with these individuals."

Izzo comes to RDECOM after serving as the deputy for acquisition and systems management under the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

Izzo vowed to build on RDECOM's reputation for serving the Soldier through innovations in science and technology.

"It is an immense privilege for me to be able to continue to serve our Army and serve you as the next commander of RDECOM," Izzo said. "I am humbled by the great care and pride which all of you in this superb organization exhibit."

Izzo added that he and his wife, Kathleen, were happy to return to Aberdeen

after spending three years at the installation in the early 1980s.

The ceremony marked only the third change of command in RDECOM's brief history.

During the event, the AMC Band's Brass Quintet performed while the Ordnance Mechanical Maintenance School, 16th Ordnance Battalion, served as the salute battery.

Following the change of command ceremony, Robinson was awarded with the Distinguished Service Medal while his wife, Reva, received the Commander's Award for Public Service. Griffin then presented Robinson with his certificate of retirement.

Robinson became commander of RDECOM in June of 2007. Under Robinson's leadership, RDECOM fielded more than 50 technologies which provide increased capabilities to Soldiers and helped save lives. He instituted a process to integrate the command's research and development portfolio and maximize the benefits of its science and technology investments. Robinson also began implementing APG 2012 – a series of initiatives emphasizing improvements to quality of life, facilities, infrastructure and services.

# Recreation organization caters to conferences

*FMWR offers one-stop for large event services*

By **KELLEY LANE-SIVLEY**  
Staff writer  
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When an organization plans a conference, there is a lot of work to do. Besides the content of workshops and scheduling of speakers, organizers must devise a plan for attendees to register and send payment. Arrangements must also be made for vendors and displays which enrich the entire conference experience. Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation is now able to handle those support services so that organizations can focus all their attention on content.

"Redstone Arsenal is the only installation where MWR is doing this," Francine Stone, FMWR business management and systems analyst, said. "We do business development and information technology. It's a conglomerate of the two. We have the capability, so we're providing it to our community."

Event organizers can take advantage of online registration and payment services FMWR has in place. Through secure web-

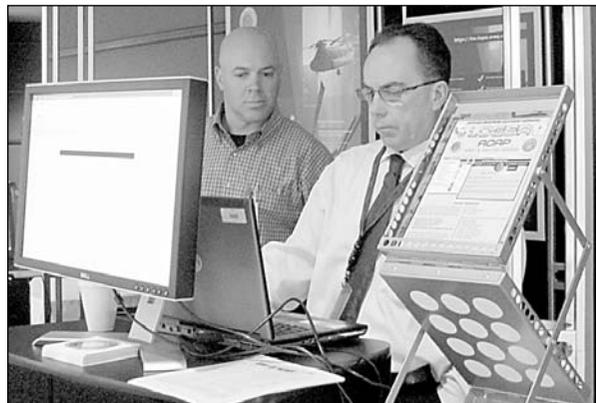


Photo by Kelley Lane-Sivley

**INFORMATION GATHERING— Conference attendee John Korak of Logistics Support Activity looks at maintenance offerings from Charlie Starling and the Army Oil Analysis Program Management Office. The conference was coordinated by Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.**

sites, organizers can take payments instantly, eliminating the worry of checks becoming lost in the mail and the hassle of trying to take payments as people arrive for the conference. Because it is all handled electronically, they can keep track of registration numbers in real time.

"It's a lot more efficient and a lot less hassle," Stone said. "They can go to one website and take care of everything at one time instead of having all these forms that

have to be faxed or mailed. Everything is accurate. There is no loss of data. There is no waiting in line."

In the event that on-site payment is necessary, FMWR can provide the equipment and manpower needed to keep things running smoothly. They also compile visitor lists so that those without vehicle decals find their passes waiting for them at the visitor center with a minimal of hassle.

The electronic services are not just for attendees. Vendor and display registration is also offered online. For those outside of the immediate area, FMWR has also put together an easier way to transport and set up booths.

"They can arrange to ship their materials here ahead of time. We can store it and have it sitting here waiting on them when they arrive to set up their booth," Stone said.

The Aviation and Missile Life Cycle Management Command Maintenance Test Pilot/Maintenance Examiner Conference held Dec. 2-4 used FMWR for their event. For this event, 290 attendees and 12 vendors from all over the world used the FMWR online registration. While they have handled smaller events, this was the first larger scale conference where FMWR provided the full complement of services.

"This is the first time we went full blown with complete registration and payment," Stone said. "We did the hosting and provided a social for the visiting military."

Vendors were pleased with the registration and setup process.

"It was incredibly easy," Laurie Hadley, co-owner of Hy Vee Equipment of Clarksville, Tenn., said.

Organizers can also take advantage of the other services FMWR has at their disposal. They can easily handle catering for all size events, Stone said. Their facilities are used to handling large crowds and their needs.

"Some of the attendees have told me that this is the first conference they've been to where they never ran out of coffee," Stone said. "There has been plenty hot and ready whenever they wanted it."

The services used can be tailored to each event and organization. Organizers can include discounts and packages for other FMWR facilities in their conference offerings, such as golf, bowling and restaurants. Often, they can also give discount coupons for outside area attractions as well.

"We can provide all the services that anyone could need for an event," Stone said.

## Prevention best answer for theft of property

By **ERIKA McPHERSON**  
Claims chief

During this holiday season, take care to secure your valuables and discourage theft.

Theft is an intentional, wrongful taking of someone else's property. Under the Personnel Claims Act, as implemented by Army Regulation 27-20, Chapter 11, a theft that is incurred by Soldiers or civilian employees incident to service may be compensable.

Which thefts are considered "incident to service"? For Soldiers, the scope can be quite broad. For example, because the Army has placed great emphasis on military personnel maintaining physical fitness, theft of Soldiers' property from installation gymnasium lockers generally is considered incident to service, even if it occurs outside normal duty hours. Similarly, theft from government quarters may also be compensable. For civilian employees, however, theft of property normally would be considered incident to service only if it occurs during duty hours.

To substantiate a theft claim, the claimant must show that he or she was the owner of the property stolen. In addition, the claimant must report the theft immediately upon discovery, or as soon as practicable thereafter. Failure to do so may be deemed a failure to substantiate the claim.

When reviewing a claim, the claims examiner will consider whether the claimant treated the property with due

care. Negligence will bar payment of a claim. This means that the owner of property should not carelessly leave property around when it can be secured. For example, a barracks room is not a proper place to leave cash and valuable jewelry lying around. Cameras and similar expensive items stored in a barracks room should be secured in a locked wall locker or foot locker when not being used. Stereos and other electronic items should be secured in a wall locker or unit supply room when a Soldier is going on leave or will be absent for an extended period.

At the workplace, claims for the loss of a purse, or of cash, ordinarily would be denied. Such items should not be left unattended for even short periods of time unless they are secured in a locked drawer, and they should not be left overnight. Vehicles are expected to be locked. If expensive items are placed in a vehicle, they are to be stored in the trunk, and only for a short period of time.

Soldiers living in quarters are expected to lock doors and windows appropriately. But on a note of holiday cheer, it is OK to keep seasonal items and lawn decorations outside of quarters. Theft of these items would normally be compensable.

An ounce of prevention is certainly worth a pound of cure. Take time to secure your valuables. In the unfortunate event your property is stolen, you may call the Claims Office at 876-9006 to see if you are eligible to file a claim for compensation.

# Here's appointment advice for Tricare beneficiaries

By PAULA TWITCHELL

*Beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator*

As a Tricare Prime beneficiary enrolled to Fox Army Health Center, you can make appointments with your primary care manager by calling Patient Appointing Services at 955-8888, option 2, and then selecting option 1. In addition, you now have the option to make appointments online. Tricareonline.com is a secure web portal that was designed in response to your needs for greater convenience and better access to care. This article discusses how to navigate using this site.

To navigate the Tricare Online website, you can use one of the following three methods: Go to Fox Army Health Center's Internet site at [www.redstone.amedd.army.mil](http://www.redstone.amedd.army.mil), click on appointments and click on the [tricareonline](http://tricareonline.com) link; go to [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil) and click on "Enter Here" (under "Additional Resources" on the lower right hand side of screen) and you will be directed to the Tricare Online portal; and go directly to [www.tricareonline.com](http://www.tricareonline.com).

After arrival to the site, you must register. Once registered, access to your personal pages will be password protected and you may use this service 24 hours a day to make appointments. Each family member must have a personal password and be registered separately.

To register, the steps are as follows: Go to Tricare Online; review the Security Disclaimer; click "I Agree"; click on "Register Now on TOL"; read the Mandatory DoD Notice & Consent and click "OK"; follow on screen directions and complete registration.

To schedule an appointment, follow these steps: Go to Tricare Online; read the Online Privacy and Security Policy; click "I agree"; click the "Log In" button; read the Mandatory DoD Notice & Consent and click "OK"; select how you want to

log in: enter your username and password; and click on "Log In." You will be taken to the "Book an Appointment" screen; select a "Visit Reason" from the drop down menu (ex: New Problem/Not Urgent, Follow-up PCM Visit, etc). Click "View Appointments"; appointments available for your PCM will be displayed. Click on the time that best fits your schedule; enter a brief description of the reason for the appointment; click "I'll Take It!" If an appointment with your PCM is not available, you may be given the option to make an appointment with an alternate provider. Print this page for your records as no reminder will be sent.

Only appointments made online can be canceled online. In order to cancel an online appointment, go to Tricare Online; read the Online Privacy and Security Policy; click "I agree." Click the "Log In" button; read the Mandatory DoD Notice & Consent; click "OK." Select how you want to log in; enter your username and password, click on "Log In" and you will be taken to the Book an Appointment Screen. At the bottom of the page under Active Medical Appointments, you should have the option to click on "Cancel TOL Appointment"; click on "Cancel TOL Appointment" and the Cancel Appointment screen will appear. At the drop down box select the reason for canceling the appointment; click on "Cancel this Appointment." You will then receive "Cancel Appointment Confirmation" letting you know that your appointment was successfully canceled. You will be given the option at that time to "Book Another Appointment." If you are not given the option to cancel an appointment that was made online, you may cancel by calling Patient Appointment Services at 955-8888 option 2, then option 1.

The key to receiving timely and effective Tricare benefits is proper registration into the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. DEERS is a worldwide, computerized database of uniformed services members (sponsors), their family members and others who are eligible for military benefits. We recommend that you keep DEERS up to date to prevent delays in care. You should update DEERS immediately whenever you experience a change in sponsor's status, get married or divorced, have a baby or adopt a child, move to a new location, become entitled to Medicare, or have a death of sponsor or family member. You may update DEERS by calling the local uniform services personnel office at Redstone Arsenal at 842-2413, calling Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office at 1-800-538-9552 or by visiting [www.tricare.mil/DEERS](http://www.tricare.mil/DEERS) and following the steps to make updates.

If you have any questions or suggestions for this website, call Military Health System Customer Service at 1-800-600-9332. Agents are available 24 hours a day for your assistance with registration, username and password issues.



Photo by Sofia Bledsoe

## Aviation charter

Brig. Gen. Tim Crosby is the new program executive officer for aviation. His successor, Paul Bogosian, hands the office flag to Dean Poppo, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology) and Army acquisition executive, as Crosby looks on during a ceremony Friday at Bob Jones Auditorium. Bogosian retired after 35 years of service.

# Know difference between urgent and emergency care

By KIM KINSER  
For the Rocket

**D**uring the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, sickness or injury can occur unexpectedly. Health care facilities, along with other businesses, may have special hours of operations. Being armed with the right information and an understanding of the difference between Emergency Care and Urgent Care can ease your mind and be helpful during an often stressful time of the year.

Urgent care services are medically necessary, non-life threatening conditions requiring professional attention within 24 hours. Examples of urgent conditions include sprains, sore throats, rising fever, coughs/colds, sinus infections and earaches.

Illnesses are not confined to regular office hours, Monday through Friday. If you and your family are enrolled in Prime or Tricare Prime Remote and find yourself in need of medical attention after hours, please contact your primary care manager before you seek urgent care. Most network or MTF providers have an on-call process available after hours to assist in urgent situations. If you are unable to contact your PCM, or on-call provider for direction, please notify your PCM within 24 hours or the next business day following care to get a referral. Prime enrollees have a \$12 co-pay when seeking urgent care from a Tricare-network Urgent Care facility.

Emergency care services are defined as medical, maternity, or psychiatric emergencies, believed to be serious medical conditions, requiring immediate medical attention. Examples of medical emergencies include, but are not limited to: severe bleeding, chest pain, shortness/inability to breathe, spinal cord or back injury, and severe eye injuries.

In the event of an emergency, you should go or be taken to the nearest emergency room for care. Tricare defines an emergency room as an organized hospital-based facility for patients who present immediate medical attention, and the facility must be available 24 hours.

Prime beneficiaries seeking emergency services in a network facility ER have a \$30 co-pay. Please note that Prime beneficiaries visiting an ER for services that are determined to be nonemergency or urgent health care based on the ER claim, may face higher charges through the Tricare

Prime Point of Service.

Prime beneficiaries should not seek emergency care for clear cases of routine illnesses. To assist in keeping the cost of health care as low as possible, you must obtain all of your nonemergency care from your PCM, or from other providers you have been referred to by your PCM or Humana Military.

Tricare Standard beneficiaries have the freedom to choose a Tricare-authorized provider when seeking urgent or emergency care; however if the beneficiary chooses to use the Extra benefit by seeing a network work provider, their out of pocket cost will be less. If an Extra or Standard beneficiary seeks treatment in an ER and the claim reflects routine care was provided, the facility charge may be denied and the professional services shall be allowed. If the contractor (HMHS) refers an Extra or Standard beneficiary to an ER, the care will be allowed.

Before an emergency or illness arises, please familiarize yourself with Tricare network or authorized facilities in your area. To locate a Tricare network facility or provider in the South region, visit the Humana Military website at: <http://www.humana-military.com/south/bene/tools-resources/Bene-SiteProvLoc.asp>. Look under the Tricare Network Facility section and click on the appropriate link. If you don't have access to the Internet, or would prefer to speak with someone for help in locating a network provider, please call beneficiary services at 1-800-444-5445.

Beneficiaries should keep their PCM informed of any urgent or emergency services they receive so referrals can be written and follow-up care arranged. By understanding Tricare's urgent/emergency care guidelines, you can be sure you're receiving the best care from the proper providers at the lowest cost to you. To read more about this topic, visit the blog site for Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director and program executive officer of the Tricare Management Activity, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) at: <http://www.health.mil/tmablog/Article.aspx?ID=396>.

*Editor's note: Kim Kinsler is a public relations representative for Humana Military Healthcare Services, the administrator of the Tricare contract for a 10-state South Region.*

# Win or lose

## National Guard holds on to slay 326th Dragons

*Double-digit lead vanishes, but Guard regains control*

By SKIP VAUGHN

Rocket editor

skip.vaughn@htimes.com

The National Guard team had a 16-point halftime lead on the 326th Chemical Company and seemed to be coasting to an opening night win Dec. 8 in the holiday basketball tournament.

But the lead dwindled and eventually disappeared in the second half. The 326th tied the score at 49-all within the final two minutes.

Alex White made a layup with 1:06 left and the National Guard went on to beat the 326th 53-49 at Pagano Gym.

"Just fundamental ballhandling," said White, a point guard. "Just do what you've got to do, take it to the rack and get back and play defense. It was a team effort on defense."

He and his team needed that effort late after seeing their 32-16 halftime lead vanish.

"We quit playing defense," National Guard player/coach Rodney Henshaw said. "And they started rebounding better and hitting the boards."

The Guard regained control by "slowing it down, some decent plays and getting easy baskets," Henshaw said.

Bryan Christa led the attack with 21 points, including three 3-pointers. He left briefly late in the game after twisting his left ankle, but returned to help the offense.

"I just felt good rhythm," said Christa, a guard. "Just kept letting it go. They were giving me open shots and I just kept taking them."

Henshaw had 12 points and David Ali added 10. Each sank two 3-pointers.

Tivon Johnson scored 13 points and Kenster Shannon had 12 for the Dragons.

**Bravo 40, 375th Engineers 16:** Steven May had 12 points and Julian Moore 10 as the Bulldogs cruised in their opener. Bravo led 20-7 at halftime.

"They didn't have that many subs. We just outlasted them," Bravo coach Brian Gebhart said. "We had youth on our side."

See **Tournament** on page 27



Photo by Skip Vaughn

**GETTING DEFENSIVE**— Bravo's 6-foot-7 center Zachary Leonard tries for a defensive rebound against the 375th Engineers on Dec. 8. The Bulldogs beat the Engineers 40-16.

# Florida favored to win national title

*Gators the choice over Oklahoma*

By SKIP VAUGHN  
 Rocket editor  
 skip.vaughn@htimes.com

Skip's Picks finished the college football season at 429-166 for 72 percent. Here are my predictions for the bowl games:

- Wake Forest vs. Navy – **Wake Forest**
- Colorado State vs. Fresno State – **Fresno**
- Memphis vs. South Florida – **Memphis**
- BYU vs. Arizona – **BYU**
- Southern Miss vs. Troy – **Southern Miss**
- Boise State vs. TCU – **Boise State**
- Hawaii vs. Notre Dame – **Notre Dame**
- Florida Atlantic vs. Central Michigan – **FA**
- West Virginia vs. North Carolina – **West Va.**
- Wisconsin vs. Florida State – **FSU**
- Miami (Fla.) vs. California – **Miami**
- Northern Illinois vs. Louisiana Tech – **LT**
- N.C. State vs. Rutgers – **Rutgers**
- Missouri vs. Northwestern – **Missouri**
- Maryland vs. Nevada – **Nevada**
- Rice vs. Western Michigan – **Rice**
- Oklahoma State vs. Oregon – **Oregon**
- Houston vs. Air Force – **Houston**
- Oregon State vs. Pittsburgh – **Pitt**
- Boston College vs. Vanderbilt – **Vandy**
- Kansas vs. Minnesota – **Minnesota**



- LSU vs. Georgia Tech – **Ga. Tech**
- South Carolina vs. Iowa – **Iowa**
- Georgia vs. Michigan State – **Georgia**
- Clemson vs. Nebraska – **Clemson**
- Penn State vs. USC – **USC**
- Cincinnati vs. Virginia Tech – **Va. Tech**
- Ole Miss vs. Texas Tech – **Ole Miss**
- Kentucky vs. East Carolina – **EC**
- Utah vs. Alabama – **Alabama**
- Buffalo vs. Connecticut – **Buffalo**
- Ohio State vs. Texas – **Texas**
- Tulsa vs. Ball State – **Ball State**
- Florida vs. Oklahoma – **Florida**



Courtesy photo

## State champions

Members of the Grissom High state championship swimming team include: from left, in top row, Hannah Holloway, Beth Anne Ashcraft, Rebecca Mai, Krys Kittredge; and bottom row, Hannah Busk, Iman Newman, Callie Smith, Marley Woody, Jasmine Sabio, Sara Henderson, Meghan Hughes and coach Barb Belyea.

## ■ Troop basketball teams make debut

### Tournament

continued from page 26

Carlos Richardson scored six for the Engineers.

**HHC 59th 54, Charlie 27:** The 59th made a 19-2 run in the final 11 minutes of the first half to build a 26-10 halftime cushion which it padded after intermission. "They didn't have any ballhandlers," 59th

player/coach Amos Jackson said. "We pressed the ball the whole second half."

Point guard Reginald LeDay led the defensive pressure and scored a game-high nine points.

"The key was keeping the pressure on the younger guys since we're a little bit older," LeDay said. "Try to run with them and substitute and keep fresh guys on the floor."

Michael Smith and Allen Douglas scored seven points apiece for Charlie.

"It was just lack of practice," said Smith, point guard for the Wolfpack. "We haven't had enough time to play

with each other and get a little chemistry going. When we get chemistry going, it'll make things better."

In other games last week in the holiday tournament which continued to Dec. 16:

**Dec. 9** – Marines def. NCO Academy 56-19; HHC 59th def. Bravo 37-29; and Charlie def. 375th Engineers 42-34.

**Dec. 10** – National Guard def. Marines 69-64; and 326th Chemical won by forfeit over NCO Academy.

**Dec. 11** – HHC 59th def. National Guard 58-44; Marines def. Charlie 61-50; and 326th Chemical def. Bravo 55-35.

# Announcements



## Conferences & Meetings

### Sergeants major

The Sergeant's Major Association conducts a monthly meeting every third Thursday of the month at 6:30 a.m. at the Officers and Civilians Club. Members are offered breakfast for \$6 plus tip. The Sergeants Major Association meetings are open to all E-9 ranks, from all services — Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and the Coast Guard. Membership into the association is a one-time lifetime fee of \$30. "We encourage all active, retired, reserve and National Guard senior Soldiers to come out and join us," a prepared release said. "Let's try and make a difference in the lives of the Soldiers, families and retirees in the Tennessee Valley area." For more information, call retired Command Sgt. Maj. Mike McSwain 842-7910.

### Young professionals

AIAA Young Professionals' Luncheon is Jan. 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Jacobs Conference Center, Galileo Conference Room (first floor). The scheduled speaker is Tim Pickens, CEO of Orion Propulsion Inc. The Jacobs Conference Center is located at 1500 Perimeter Parkway. From Redstone Arsenal, drive north on Research Park Boulevard (Rideout Road), exit at U.S. 72 West toward Athens, turn right at the light onto Perimeter Parkway, and turn right after McAlisters. To RSVP for this chili lunch, e-mail emmett.j.mcdonald@nasa.gov.

### Bible studies

Protestant Women of the Chapel holds Bible study classes every Thursday at 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. at Bicentennial Chapel. Childwatch is available at the Child Development Center on a first-come, first-served basis for the 9:30 study. PWOC also provides adult supervision for home-schooled children at the

chapel for the 9:30 study. "The lunchtime Bible study meets from 11:30-12:30 so take an hour off from your busy workday to release, refresh and regroup while learning of the healing power of God's word," a prepared release said. For more information, call Laura Keegan 489-7686 or Sharon Olshefski 489-0404. The contact for the lunchtime group is Mattie L. Jones 828-9890 or 508-7744.

### Resource managers

The American Society of Military Comptrollers, Redstone/Huntsville Chapter's monthly luncheon meeting is Jan. 8 at 11:30 a.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church, Personal Growth Center. ASMC executive director Robert Hale is to speak on "Trends That Matter to Defense Financial Managers." For ticket information, call Kim Wright 876-6163 or Lisa Lowery 876-7086. Cost is \$11 for members, \$12 non-members. There will be door prizes and other giveaways.

### Veterans group

VFW Post 5162 meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the American Legion building on Triana between Bob Wallace Avenue and Governors Drive. For more information, call Robert Davenport 679-3180.

### Admin professionals

The International Association of Administrative Professionals invites all civilians and contractors in any type of admin field to attend its meeting held every third Tuesday of the month from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Officers and Civilians Club. For more information, call Hillary Marshall 313-1349.

### Air/space/missile defense

The Air, Space and Missile Defense Association will hold its annual membership

See Announcements on page 29



Photo by Skip Vaughn

## Festive row

Jaime Mullins and Marilyn Valentine decorated for the holidays, as did their co-workers, at AMCOM G-6 (Chief Information Officer) on the third floor of building 5301.

and awards luncheon Jan. 16 at the Von Braun Center, North Hall. Social begins at 11 a.m. and lunch at 11:30. Scheduled speaker is Lt. Gen. Kevin Campbell, commander of the Space and Missile Defense Command. Individual seating is \$30; and a table of eight costs \$240. For more information, call Sigma Services 533-6986. Reservations can be made online at <http://www.conferencesbysigma.com/asmda/>.

## Toastmasters

Anyone interested in improving their public speaking ability is invited to attend the Lunar Nooners Toastmasters Club 9783, which meets Tuesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the building 4610 cafeteria. For more information, call Paul Pickett 544-6078.



## Miscellaneous

### Reserve unit openings

A local Army Reserve detachment doing weekend drills on Redstone Arsenal has openings for computer specialists. The unit seeks prior active duty Soldiers or transfers from other Reserve/National Guard units with a specialty of 25B information systems operators. The unit will consider reclassification action to 25B if you can document your Civilian Acquired Skills to include your education/experience in the areas of database management, programming, networking and/or telecommunications. A minimum of a secret clearance is required, and you must possess the personal qualifications to pass a SSBI background investigation for upgrade to top secret soon after unit entry. Specialties 74C and 74F have merged into the 25B career group and convert to 25B as well. To schedule an interview, call Sgt 1st Class Scott Ambrose 655-9435 or Chief Warrant Officer David Ricketts 955-4026.

### Civilian deployment

Civilian employees are needed to support Aviation and Missile Command missions overseas. Deployment opportunities exist in Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Skill sets needed include acquisition, maintenance, supply, quality assurance, engineers, operations officers, logistics and automation, among others. Volunteers must be currently employed by AMCOM. Contractors cannot be considered to fill these positions. Civilians interested in deploying should notify their supervisor and call Eddie Allen 876-4106 or Carl Washington 876-2082. Contractors and other interested people can access [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil) for openings and opportunities for overseas employment.

### Computer classes

Self-paced computer classes are offered at Army Community Service to assist military spouses in learning or enhancing their computer skills. Classes are available in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access, Publisher and Windows XP. All classes are free and are offered Mon-

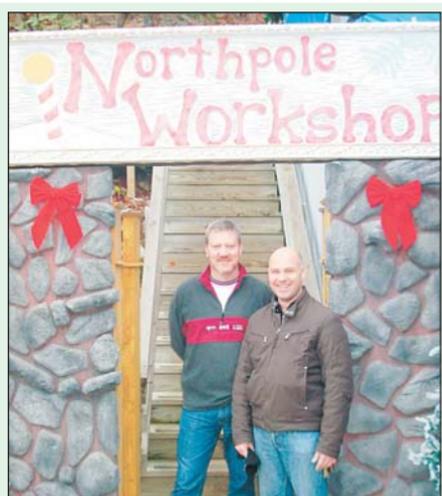


Photo by Ron Garrett/IMSO

## Jingle rocky top

Master Sgt. Marc Devroedt and Capt. Gunther Haustrate of Belgium visit the Northpole Workshop on Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga. The International Military Student Office took 11 students to Chattanooga and Lynchburg on a field studies program tour Dec. 5-7. The students were from Norway, Belgium and Canada.

day through Friday anytime between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Certificates will be given after successful completion. Call 876-5397 to pre-register.

### Surplus sales

Marshall Space Flight Center's surplus property can be purchased through the General Services Administration sales web site. Go to [www.gsauctions.gov](http://www.gsauctions.gov), search by State of Alabama; and there you will find items located at MSFC and other federal agencies in Alabama to bid on. For more information, call 544-4667.

### Motorcycle safety

To permanently register a motorcycle on Redstone Arsenal, the DoD requires all motorcyclists to complete a Motorcycle Safety Foundation training course. There are two programs offered free of charge to Army personnel and on a space available basis to others authorized access to Redstone Arsenal. For information call Keith Coates at the Garrison Safety Office 876-3383, e-mail [keith.coates@us.army.mil](mailto:keith.coates@us.army.mil) or e-mail MSF instructor Ralph Harris at [93hdstc@bellsouth.net](mailto:93hdstc@bellsouth.net).

### Reserve unit

If you have several years invested in your military career, you do not want conflicts between Reserve duty and civilian life to keep you from earning 20 qualifying years. The 184th Individual Mobilization Augmentee Detachment affords you the opportunity to drill for retirement points on Tuesday evenings. You still earn pay for and retirement points for IMA or IRR annual training and other tours, as well as your 15 automatic retirement points for

# Rocket Announcements

being in the active Reserve. The unit meets at 5:30 p.m. most Tuesdays on Redstone Arsenal. For more information, e-mail Staff Sgt. King jwk108@yahoo.com or visit the web site <http://imad.redstone.army.mil/>.

## VA benefits

Veterans Administration representative Andrew Carver will visit Redstone Arsenal on Wednesday of every week from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. to provide anyone with assistance and information about veterans benefits and VA processes. Please give him a call and schedule an appointment at (334) 430-8860; or you can reach him at 842-2718 Wednesday only. Office location is building 3493, Retirement Services Division, Military Personnel Office. Family members, retirees and active duty are welcome to solicit information regarding VA benefits.

## Officer candidates

The Huntsville Recruiting Company is seeking proficient individuals interested in commissioning as Army officers upon

completion of Officer Candidate School. If you are a college graduate with a four-year degree or higher from an accredited institution of postsecondary education (college seniors may apply), this is an opportunity for you to become an Army officer. Graduates of OCS are commissioned as second lieutenants. Commissions are available in the active Army and the Reserve. For more information, or to schedule an interview, call Maj. Cyrus Russ 539-6511 or 539-6512.

## Pilots wanted

The Huntsville Recruiting Company is seeking qualified applicants to apply for Warrant Officer Flight Training School. Applicants must have a high school diploma and age 18-33. Age waivers will be considered. For more information, or to schedule an interview, call Maj. Cyrus Russ 539-6511 or 539-6512.

## Cadet program

Join the Army Reserves and enroll in your college ROTC program simultaneously through the Simultaneous Membership Program. Earn anywhere from \$470 to \$1,400 a month as a SMP cadet. As a member of the Army Reserve SMP Cadet Program, you are non-deployable, you have an opportunity to pursue the degree of your choice and you can assure yourself of a future as a commissioned officer in the active Army or the Reserves. For more information, call your local Army Reserve recruiter 518-3972.

## Veterans office

The local office for Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs provides assistance to veterans and their families in applying for benefits from the VA. These benefits include, but are not limited to, Service Connected Compensation Claims, Non-Service Connected Pensions, Appeals, Death Benefits for Widows, Education Applications, VA Insurance, and applications for VA Headstone/Markers. The office can also assist you in filing for state veteran benefits, for example the Alabama Dependent Scholarship Program and admittance to the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home in Huntsville. "We are a full service office with accredited veteran service officers available Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and are located at 115-B Washington St. off the Courthouse Square in downtown Huntsville," a prepared release said. "Service is based on a first come, first serve system. No appointment necessary." For more information, call 532-1662.

## Army training

Do you want to be on the cutting edge of Army training? The 1st Battle Command Training Group offers the opportunity for promotion while simultaneously enhancing your professional management, training and leadership skills. It has immediate openings for sergeant first class through lieutenant colonel - specialty and branch are immaterial - who want to transfer



Courtesy photo

## Holiday helper

Association of the U.S. Army representative Carolyn Rountree serves as a blacksmith helper Dec. 4 when AUSA's Redstone-Huntsville Chapter hosts military families to an evening at Santa's Village, located in Constitution Village in downtown Huntsville. The children enjoyed Christmas carolers, costumed Elves, Snowmen and Gingerbread men. They walked through Billowing Snow Storms as they toured the Bakery, Blacksmith Shop, and on to visit Santa and Mrs. Claus in their home. They then were guests to a private party with hot chocolate, snacks and cookies, all free throughout the night, courtesy of AUSA.

make a significant contribution to the readiness of the Army. The 1st BCTG conducts continental U.S. pre- and post-mobilization computer simulation based Battle Command Staff Training exercises. It trains and validates Army Reserve and National Guard units throughout the Southeast in wartime readiness. It offers CONUS mobilization opportunities training and preparing USAR and ARNG units for deployment. Unit benefits include Fragmented Annual Training, and opportunity to travel throughout the Southeast. It encourages and supports attendance at Army professional development schools. For information call 1st Sgt. Larry King (205) 987-8443 ext. 4410, Capt. John Walker (205) 444-5208 or Lt. Col. Anthony Escott (205) 444-5163.

## Customer services

Do you have a comment or opinion about the services provided at Redstone Arsenal? Team Redstone and all DoD installations want your feedback about the services you are receiving at your home station. This is a new approach to customer service with the resources, enthusiasm and manpower to ensure your voice is heard and understood. Each installation is now assigned a full-time customer service officer, whose sole responsibility is to ensure customers have multiple avenues to offer feedback on all services that are provided by the Installation Management Command. The process for your individual feedback is through the Interactive Customer Evaluation System which is automated through the Internet or filled out with an ICE comment card at the service provider's location. You can access the Interactive Customer Evaluation site at <http://ice.disa.mil> or [www.redstone.army.mil](http://www.redstone.army.mil) and leave a comment. You can reach customer service officer Steve McFadden at 876-3294, e-mail [steven.ray.mcfadden@us.army.mil](mailto:steven.ray.mcfadden@us.army.mil) or the ICE administrator Wendy Norris at [wendy.norris1@us.army.mil](mailto:wendy.norris1@us.army.mil).

## Interactive feedback

Have you ever gotten "hot" over a situation and you wanted to tell someone? Take it to the source so you can "cool" down with ICE, the Interactive Customer Evaluation web site. You have direct access to all Redstone Arsenal service providers to let them know how they are doing, tell them of shortcomings or offer a pat on the back for a job well done. Log onto the Internet at <http://www.garrison.redstone.army.mil>; click on the ICE icon on right; and scroll down and find the service category you wish to rate or scroll to bottom and click "show all" to see the entire list for Redstone Arsenal. For more information, call 876-3294.

## Tax assistance center

The Redstone Tax Assistance Center needs volunteers to both prepare active duty and retiree returns and to schedule such appointments. Volunteer preparers must attend a 32-hour computer assisted training program to earn their IRS Tax Preparers Certificate. The training and certification will be held Jan. 5-9. The Tax Center will open for business from Jan. 19 through April 15. Volunteers are asked to work at least one four-hour shift each

week. "This is a highly rewarding volunteer opportunity that not only provides a tremendous service to the Redstone community, but will give you an in-depth understanding of the tax system and the ability to prepare your own tax return," a prepared release said. To volunteer or for more information, call Capt. Alyson Mortier 313-1289 or e-mail [alyson.mortier@us.army.mil](mailto:alyson.mortier@us.army.mil).

## Thrift Shop grants

The Redstone Thrift Shop Welfare Committee announces its annual grant program. It will be accepting applications for 2009 starting on Jan. 1. The deadline for applications is Feb. 28. Requests will be reviewed and awarded in April. For an application, organizations wishing to solicit funds should call Jennifer Kennedy 682-6981 or e-mail [jkhunter\\_1999@hotmail.com](mailto:jkhunter_1999@hotmail.com).

## DRMO news

The Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office will be closed Dec. 26 during the holiday season. "We will be observing the holidays and the day after," a prepared release said. The DRMO will reopen the following Monday after closure for normal business hours.

## Warrant officer scholarships

The Redstone Arsenal Warrant Officer Association offers the RSAWOA Annual Scholarship Program. RSAWOA will award a minimum of one \$1,000 scholar-

ship. Application packets are due by April 1. Applications will be accepted from the children (natural and adopted), dependent stepchildren under age 21 (seniors in high school or currently enrolled college freshmen), and spouses of members of the active duty, National Guard, Reserve, and retired military and DoD civilians/contractors in the Tennessee Valley. Completed application packets should be mailed to: RSAWOA Scholarship Program, c/o Richard Storie, 102 Trevor Circle, Toney, AL 35773-9651.

## Library story time

There's a special book place just for children at the FMWR Post Library, and every Wednesday at 10 a.m. interactive stories are read to young children. After story time the children may stay to play in the children's room where Ling Ling the panda sits at the little red table. Children of any age may come - the story time is especially designed for babies and then on up through kindergarten. This is a casual drop-in small group experience, and the books are chosen to match the children present. The aim is to help children fall in love with books and libraries at a very young age. The library is building 3323 on Redeye Road. For more information, call the library 876-4741.



Photo by Merv Brokke

## Science project

Four teams of students from the Academy of Science and Foreign Language and their teacher Angela Traylor, second from right, opened their classroom doors and showcased their ongoing projects for the 2009 eCYBERMISSION competition. Gayla McMichael, left, an electrical engineer with the Weapon Sciences Directorate of the Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center, watches as one team tests a household sponge as part of their project on kitchen safety. Other projects, chosen by the students for the competition, include pool, Internet and crosswalk safety. McMichael serves as the Department of Defense's science, technology, engineering and mathematics education coordinator for Alabama and as the Army's eCYBERMISSION representative in the Huntsville area. eCYBERMISSION is a free web-based science, math and technology competition designed by the Army to encourage an early interest in these fields. Working in small teams, students are asked to identify a problem in their community and develop a solution using the scientific method. Participants must be in the sixth, seventh, eighth or ninth grades and the final date to register teams for the 2009 competition is Dec. 19. For more information, go to [www.ecybermission.com](http://www.ecybermission.com).

## Community grants

The Officer and Civilian Women's Club, which distributes money to non-profit groups each year, is now accepting applications for grants. To receive a copy of the application form, e-mail Demy Robley, OCWC community assistance chair, at [puaaloha@bellsouth.net](mailto:puaaloha@bellsouth.net). Forms are also available in the OCWC Southern Exposure Newsletter. All requests must conform to the OCWC Community Assistance Request Form. Deadline for submission is Feb. 28. Requests postmarked or received after the deadline will not be considered. For more information, call Robley 882-6064. OCWC is a private organization not affiliated with Redstone Arsenal or the Army.

## Holiday gala

The 100 Black Men holiday gala is Dec. 27 at the Von Braun Center North Hall. Reception starts at 7 p.m. and the dinner at 8. Cost is \$50 per person, \$400 per table. For more information, call 536-8050.

## AER scholarships

Army Emergency Relief offers "free" money for education. The 2009-10 Army Emergency Relief Scholarship Program instructions and applications are available on the AER website, [www.aerhq.org](http://www.aerhq.org). Assistance is available for spouses and children of active duty and retired Soldiers. All applications and supporting documents must be sent to AER headquarters and postmarked no later than March 1. For more information, call Army Community Service 876-5397.

## General officer retires

A retirement ceremony for Brig. Gen. Richard McCabe, former commanding general, White Sands Missile Range, N.M., will be held Friday at 2 p.m. at Bob Jones Auditorium. The ceremony will be hosted by Lt. Gen. Kevin Campbell, commander of Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command.

## Fox holiday hours

Fox Army Health Center will close at noon Friday to allow staff to celebrate the holiday season. The health center will be closed Dec. 25-26 and Jan. 1-2 for the holidays. The health center is closed on Thursday afternoons, weekends and all federal holidays. Advice Nurses are available during non-duty hours at 955-8888 or 1-800-223-9531 to provide care advice. Fox Army Health Center does not have an emergency room or emergency medical services. Dial 911 in the event of an emergency.

## Vehicle registration

Vehicle Registration, building 3423 on Gray Road, and the Visitor Center, building 4122 at Gate 9, will both be closed for the following holidays: Dec. 25-26 for Christmas and Jan. 1-2 for New Year's. "The staff at the Directorate of Emergency Services would like to wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season," a prepared release said.

### IAAP scholarships

The Redstone Arsenal Chapter, International Association of Administrative Professionals will present two \$1,000 annual scholarship awards to a local high school and college student majoring in a business field. Merit awards may apply toward tuition, books and fees for undergraduate or graduate level studies. Deadline for applications is March 31. For more information and/or a scholarship application, call Jackie Kenner 876-8131. An application can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/iaaprsa/home.htm>.

### Student apprentices

The Department of Defense initiated the Science and Engineering Apprentices Program in 1980, under the direction of the Executive Office of the President, to involve academically talented high school and college students in hands-on research activities and student-mentor relationships during the summer. This program is designed for students who have demonstrated aptitude and interest in science and engineering courses and careers. A major benefit of the program is pairing the students with university and professional engineering mentors. The high school and college programs are designed for students who are United States citizens, with a Social Security card, and at least 15 years old by the beginning of the program June 1, 2009. The apprentice program is divided into periods of 8, 10 and 12 weeks. Both programs are fast-paced and require disciplined professional work habits. Junior and senior scientists and engineers gain additional experience by serving as mentors for first time students, and providing guidance through interactive research processes. The points of contact for application information are senior counselors at all public, private and parochial high schools and college placement services. Possible career placement areas at Redstone Arsenal include physics, chemistry, computer science, engineering and mathematics. The deadline for submission of applications is Jan. 30. If students are unsuccessful in receiving application information from high school senior counselors or college placement service, contact the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, Tina BoClair, located in building 5308, phone 313-4834. Review application information at <http://www.gwseap.net> or <http://www.usaeop.com>.

### Nutrition class

Have you already resigned yourself to the usual holiday weight gain? Did you know, according to the New England Journal of Medicine, the average American gains about two pounds over the holiday season? While that may not sound like much, it means an additional two pounds you have to "lose" come the New Year. Join Fox Army Health Center on Thursday from noon-1 p.m. for a "Lunch and Learn." Speaking at this event will be registered dietitian Desiree Walker, the newest addition to Fox Army Health Center Wellness Center. She will speak about eating strategies for the holidays and discuss low fat baking tips.

Call 955-8888, ext. 1430 to reserve your spot in this class. Seating is limited.

### MILPO hours

The Military Personnel Office is closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2. It is open for business as usual all other days excluding holidays.

### Commissary appreciation

The Redstone Commissary and Procter & Gamble began their "Twelve Days of Christmas" countdown Dec. 13. They plan to give a gift to customers by raffle at 5 p.m. daily.

### Commissary holidays

Here's the Commissary's holiday schedule: open Dec. 22, close early (3 p.m.) Dec. 24, closed Dec. 25-26 and Jan. 1.

### Unity breakfast

The Delta Theta Lambda Education Foundation of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. announces the 24th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast on Jan. 19 at 8 a.m. at the Von Braun Center North Hall. The speaker is Dr. Randal Pinkett, an entrepreneur, speaker, author, scholar and community servant. Pinkett is a former Rhodes Scholar and college athlete who holds five academic degrees from Rutgers, Oxford and MIT, and was the season four winner of the hit series "The Apprentice." Proceeds from the Unity Breakfast are used solely by the Delta Theta Lambda Education Foundation to aid students in their pursuit of academic excellence through the awarding of scholarships, mentoring, tutoring and the administration of leadership training. Individual tickets are \$25, or a reserved table (seats eight) can be purchased for \$250. For ticket information, call Timothy Richmond 859-3964 or Herman Thornton 852-8428.

### ASMC scholarships

The American Society of Military Comptrollers is accepting applications for its 2009 scholarship program. Scholarship applications are due by Feb. 28. The ASMC Scholarship Program is to provide financial assistance to aid ASMC members or their immediate family in continuing their educational endeavors. Applicants must be a current ASMC member or a high school senior, undergraduate or those working on graduate programs (immediately related to an ASMC member). Applicants must have maintained a 3.0 gpa. Applications may be submitted to the following: Judy Smith, chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, building 5300 (third floor), 313-2379; Michelle Cobb, building 5300, 876-8361; Jackie Shaw, building 5300, 876-8932; Debbie O'Neal, building 5400, 876-2671; Dee Kowallik, building 5681, 313-4020; Jessica Dunaway, building 5308, 313-0533; Connie Atchley, 101 Wynn Drive, 313-8254; Cody Swinford, building 5309, 876-3363; Susan Zimmerly, building 5300, 876-5133; Lisa Lowry, building 5400, 876-7086; Dana Wilbanks, building 5400, 876-4283; April East, building 5300, 876-8857; and Cheryl Richmond, G3, 955-0066.



### Auto skills center

The Auto Skills Center will hold an open house today from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at building 3617 on Entac Circle. Free safety classes will be offered every hour. There will also be free vehicle winter safety inspections, facility tours, door prizes and refreshments. This will be an opportunity for servicemembers to satisfy their requirements to inspect their vehicles prior to the holidays. Written POV inspection reports will be provided to your unit upon request.

### Family focus group

Installation Management Command has established a Customer Management Services office at each Army installation. Customer Management Services utilizes a three-tiered feedback system established to determine the satisfaction of the Soldiers, family members, teens, retirees, veterans and civilians who work, play and live on Redstone Arsenal. The input mechanisms for feedback come from multiple sources such as online submission of comments, annual leadership and constituent assessments and community forums /town halls. These community forums or focus groups obtain issues or recommendations by the attendees or delegates that are worked and presented to the post leadership much like the annual AFAP conference. This program is called Community First. This is a call or invitation to all family members who would like to participate in the first family member (spouses/guardians) focus group held on Redstone Arsenal. This is a chance to voice issues that can be fixed on the installation or put on the Army Family Action Plan agenda for next year. The meeting will be held Jan. 29 from 6-8 p.m. in the new Redstone Communities Clubhouse in building 302. Light refreshments will be served. This will be the time to share concerns, hear and possibly solve issues and communicate with each other. Anyone wishing to participate may call customer service officer Steve McFadden 876-3294 or email at [rsacms@conus.army.mil](mailto:rsacms@conus.army.mil).

### New Year's Eve event

Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation will host the 2009 New Year's Eve Celebration on Dec. 31 starting at 7 p.m. at the Officers and Civilians Club. Tickets are \$50 per person and include a dinner, live music, dancing, party favors, continental breakfast and complimentary glass of champagne. Room packages are also available. For tickets and more information, call 830-2582.

### Art show

The Arts Council's new art@TAC Gallery will hold its second show/reception Thursday from 4-6 p.m. at the Von Braun Center in downtown Huntsville. The exhibition continues through March. Admission is free. For more information, call 519-2787.

### Christmas spirit

The Huntsville Achievement School presents "The Spirit of Christmas" at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Von Braun Playhouse. Some of the performers include The Gospel Imperials, The Alpha Ensemble, Latin Rhythm, Monica Phipps Stewart, Dr. Sha Li, Bryan Cordell, Cathedral Chimes, The Madison Mission Drum Corps, and others. Tickets may be purchased at the Huntsville Achievement School, the Arts Council at the Von Braun Center and at the door. For more information, call the Huntsville Achievement School 539-1772.

### Holiday ham

MWR and HoneyBaked Ham are partnering up again this year to save you 10 percent on your holiday ham or turkey order. Locations and times for pickup are as follows: Sparkman Center (in the parking lot in front of the cafeteria) Dec. 22 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.; and Diane Campbell Recreation Center (in parking lot) Dec. 22 from 2-4 p.m. Visit [www.redstonemwr](http://www.redstonemwr) for more information or to place your order today. The deadline to place an order is close of business Friday.

### Aviation challenge

The Tennessee Valley Army Aviation Association of America has an offer for children or grandchildren of its chapter members. These youngsters, age 9-18, can win an Aviation Challenge scholarship at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Applications are due by Feb. 3. Three scholarships will be awarded, valued up to \$1,000 each. For more information, call Russ Dunford or Tonya Maurice at 457-5355 or 655-5122 or e-mail [aviation.challenge.scholarship@gmail.com](mailto:aviation.challenge.scholarship@gmail.com)

### Smoking cessation

Preventive Medicine/Health Promotion at Fox Army Health Center offers an interactive tobacco cessation program that is facilitated by a certified counselor and/or registered nurse. For more information call Valerie Francis, program manager, at 955-8888 ext. 1431 or Rick Stock, health promotion coordinator, at 955-8888 ext. 1443.

