

Trailblazer Marine takes on hero status



At home in Huntsville, retired Marine Lt. Gen. Frank Libutti stands near a display of pictures, awards and books that remind him of his military and civilian careers. Along with pictures of veterans from his Marine troop in Vietnam, and Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush, Libutti will soon add the Audie Murphy Patriotism Award he received during the Fourth of July Spirit of America Festival in Decatur.

Photo by Kari Hawkins

Audie Murphy award recognizes Vietnam veteran for leadership

By Kari Hawkins

AMCOM/Garrison Public and Congressional Affairs

In many respects, Frank Libutti can be considered a trailblazer.

He blazed trails as a Marine, leading his troops into battle in Vietnam during Operation Buffalo. He was wounded three times while defending and assisting the wounded, and earned a Silver Star and three Purple Hearts from the battle.

He blazed trails as he climbed the ranks through the Marine Corps, with commands in Japan, Korea, Kenya, Somalia and the U.S. He served in the Marines for 35 years and retired as a lieutenant general after serving as commander of 80,000 troops making up the Marine Corps Forces, Fleet Marine Force and Marine Corps Bases in the Pacific.

As a civilian, he blazed trails to stand up the Office of Homeland Defense for the Department of Defense following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and then went on to lead New York City's efforts against terrorism as the police department's deputy commissioner for counterterrorism.

He blazed trails to help build the foundation for what is today the nation's Department of Homeland Security as the undersecretary for domestic intelligence and critical infrastructure protection.

And, then, coming to Huntsville, he continued to blaze trails as an industry leader while also establishing the Semper Fi Community Task Force.

But if you call Libutti a trailblazer, he will demur, saying he can only accept such a title given one caveat – that nothing he has accomplished would have been possible without the help of the people who have stood beside him.

"The lion's share of the credit goes to the people around me," the 66-year-old decorated Marine said. "In the military, that went from the troops to the officers who supported me, to those who worked for me and with me, who gave me advice and challenged me to do my best, who taught me to understand the mission, to take charge and to be aggressive about completing that mission. Those kinds of people also gave me the support I needed in other areas of my career and life."

So, during this year's Fourth of July celebration, as Libutti stood on the stage at the Spirit of America Festival in Decatur to accept the prestigious Audie Murphy Patriotism Award, he was joined by the memories and spirit of those who have touched his life throughout his military service and civilian years. The award puts him in the ranks with such fellow recipients as astronaut John Young, Sen. John Sparkman, the Challenger Crew, Chief Warrant Officer Mike Durant of Black Hawk Down, Medal of Honor recipient Col. Leo Thorsness and, last year's awardee, nationally recognized author Homer Hickam.

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Rocket Views

What's the worst accident you've ever had?

By Skip Vaughn

Margaret Seago
AMCOM

Integrated Materiel Management Center
"Fell off a motorcycle. We were in the mountains, and we were going over bumps. I was a passenger. We were on a 1600 Honda. We were over the mountains. We were taking an edge. I could not hold the person and it threw me off the motorcycle. I scraped my arms and my legs."



Frank Chase Jr.
Logistics Support Activity, PS Magazine

"The worst accident I've ever had was when I was on my way to church years ago. I was on my way to church in Washington state. A guy pulled out in front of me and we ran straight into the side of his truck. There were just a few bumps and bruises but nothing serious. We had a few friends in the car but they were OK, too. But the front of the car was completely smashed in. And I still have a picture of the car today. It was a miracle we had no injuries."

Capt. Matthew Woolsey
AMCOM Command Group

"I was in a car accident when I was 16 years old. I was driving a little too fast on wet pavement, lost control of the car and slid off the road. Totaled the car but luckily I walked away unhurt. I learned a valuable lesson."



Getting to know you

By Skip Vaughn

AMCOM/Garrison Public and Congressional Affairs

Name: Patty Wyatt

Job: Financial security specialist, AMCOM Command Management. I do all the travel for the commanding general.

Where do you call home?

I'm an Army brat, so I guess Huntsville. I was born in Bitburg, Germany but was very small when my father came back to Redstone.

What do you like about your job?

I guess No. 1 I like my co-workers. And fast-paced environment of the paperwork that I do.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

My husband (Lonnie) and I ride motorcycles. And we have two dogs that we train and work with, play with.

What are your goals?

I guess to build my retirement fund, and of course retire out here at Redstone. I'd like for this to be my last place of employment (laugh). I've been here two years. One year I was a contractor and was converted over to government.

What's at the top of your "bucket list" of things you want to do before you kick the bucket?

Travel the United States. That's the top of my bucket list, because I haven't ever traveled around. I think there's so many things to see in the United States. I have no desire to travel overseas. I think there's so many things to see in the United States – the beauty and the country.



Crimes, accidents and other occurrences

The Directorate of Emergency Services provided the following list of reported incidents for June 23-29:

June 23: A civilian who drove to Gate 10 lost was charged for driving under the influence. She was transported to the police station where she was tested on the Dreager with .18 percent blood alcohol content. She was detained until her BAC reached an acceptable level and later received a violation notice.

June 24: A Soldier was arrested by Hartselle Police for desertion. He was later released to Redstone Police and processed back to his Fort Hood, Texas, unit.

June 24: Redstone Fire responded to a vehicle fire at the Rideout Road Visitor Center. The fire was quickly extinguished and the vehicle was towed from the Arsenal.

June 27: During a random inspection at Gate 10, a contractor was found to be driving with a suspended license.

June 28: A Soldier tested positive for the use of marijuana during a unit urinalysis test.

June 29: A Soldier was arrested by Oxford Police for theft and desertion. The subject is in the Oxford Jail and will be released to Redstone Police a court date.

Traffic accidents reported: Six without injury, one with injury.

Violation notices issued: 43 speeding, 1 suspended driver's license, 1 driving under the influence, 1 no driver's license, 1 no insurance, 2 stop sign violations, 2 parking violations.



Trailblazer, *continued from page 1 ...*

“It makes me humbled and honored to be considered to receive this award given the list of those who have received it in the past,” Libutti said.

The award is especially meaningful to Libutti because Audie Murphy, a World War II Medal of Honor recipient and a Hollywood movie star, was one of his boyhood heroes.

“He was a great American hero and a guy whose behavior was a great example for youth in America,” he said. “He got a lot of visibility and media coverage, and that all made a very positive impression on me. He was fulfilling the American dream. He was a war hero who was successful in business and as an actor.”

A native of Long Island, N.Y., who grew up the oldest of seven children, Libutti’s American dream began when he graduated from The Citadel in 1966, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps later that year. In early 1967, he was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines in Vietnam, where he served as an infantry platoon commander.

At age 22, on July 2, 1967, he and his platoon were on a mission to reinforce a beleaguered Marine company, which had sustained heavy casualties and was in danger of being overrun by a much larger North Vietnamese army force. As his unit approached the besieged unit, it came under heavy artillery and mortar attack. Despite being wounded three times, Libutti assisted in evacuating casualties and lead his platoon. He did not receive medical treatment until all casualties were evacuated.

That experience changed Libutti’s dream, and from it a Marine commander was born.

“I had planned for three years with the Marines and then I was going to get out, get my master’s, and be a coach and a teacher,” Libutti said. “But my Vietnam experience turned me around. It changed my attitude and my respect for the troops I led. They had character, attitude and commitment. We saw a great deal of battle in a short amount of time. There was loyalty and friendship, and a commitment to the broader concept of the Marine Corps.

“I fell in love with the whole ethos of the Marine Corps, and I respected and honored the troops I was privileged to lead.”

Libutti committed his life to the Marine Corps term *Semper Fidales*, meaning “always faithful” to God, country, and family and friends. And he sought out assignments that allowed him to lead and mentor Marines.

“The opportunity to lead, to be in command, was the most fulfilling aspect of my career,” he said. “Marines are about embracing the concepts of leadership, knowing the mission, and being prepared to execute the mission. And I enjoyed taking care of those troops and their families.”

Libutti’s Marine career included various command assignments, including infantry company commander; executive officer of the Marine Barracks in Naples, Italy, and at Camp Pendleton, Calif.; assistant chief of staff for intelligence with the 1st Marine Division; and commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force in Japan; and commander of 80,000 troops as the Marine’s commanding general in the Pacific.

In his civilian career, Libutti worked with DoD’s Department of Homeland Defense and then with New York City’s police counterterrorism group. Even those jobs were involved and uptempo, it was his two years of service with the Department of Homeland Security that were particularly challenging.

“The department was new and we were making inroads working with other agencies within the federal government,” Libutti said. “The challenge was to work in full support of and in compliance as a partner with other intelligence agencies and the civilian sector to identify vulnerabilities within our critical infrastructure. One of the biggest challenges was hiring qualified people with high clearances and experience in intelligence.

“It was really exciting because we were carving out a way ahead for the department in terms of actions and protocols as well as policy. We laid the foundation for where DHS is today.”

Libutti and his family, including wife Jeanie, who is a retired Navy captain, and his 13-year-old daughter Michela (the family also includes grown children Christopher and Catherine) moved to Huntsville in 2005, where Libutti served as chairman and chief executive officer of Digital Fusion until it was purchased by another company. He is now president and chief operating officer of 3D Global Solutions.

One of the accomplishments Libutti is most proud of is his work in establishing the North Alabama Semper Fi Community Task Force, which has more than 200 members. He is also proud of the group's work in hosting Wounded Warrior Weekends to bring wounded warriors and their spouses to North Alabama to enjoy Veterans Day activities and the Marine Corps Ball along with a river cruise, fishing tournament and veterans benefits counseling. Last year, the group hosted 60 wounded Marines and Soldiers. There is no other program of its size in the nation.

"We celebrate their commitment to our country and their sacrifice and their family's sacrifice to our country," Libutti said. "We do our best to say 'thank you.'"

"The name of the game is we take care of our veterans and our troops, and their families. Because of their commitment to the security of our country we owe this to them."

For all his accomplishments and recognitions, Libutti doesn't consider himself a standout hero.

"There are so many heroes in life who embrace the challenge and make decisions that are ethical and moral," he said. "The real heroes are those in the military who made the supreme sacrifice for our freedom."

That is why, on the Fourth of July, as he received his honor at the Spirit of America Festival, Libutti's thoughts went especially to the Marines under his command on July 2, 1967, and especially those who were killed that day.

"I remember with great respect and fondness and also with great emotion the Marines that I led that day. It is a very special day of recollection for me. It's deeply meaningful because that's where I began my love story with my troops, and their unselfish behavior and sacrifices," he said.

"I hope I reminded people that the Fourth of July is a celebration of the greatness and the birth of our country. We should take the time to pause and reflect on the millions of people who have gone before us and made America what it is today."

Getting ready for challenge of Marine boot camp

Recruits take on

6-mile fast hike

By Kari Hawkins

AMCOM/Garrison Public and Congressional Affairs

Dylan Esterling of Bob Jones High School celebrated his 17th birthday on a six-mile HUMP, a "fast hike" that future Marines take with rucksacks on their backs.

David Ashley, also of Bob Jones, gave up a family vacation to the beach to spend a morning preparing for basic training with members of the Marine's Kilo Battery.

And sister-brother Ronald and Meghan Seagrave of Grissom High School left their triplitt brother behind to push forward with a Marine career that begins with boot camp July 15.

The recent high school graduates were among 85 future Marines who participated in an annual "poolee" event Friday at Kilo Battery headquarters on Memorial Parkway.

"This shows that what you've been doing the last year has prepared you," Gunnery Sgt. Damian Cason told the poolees after their fast hike. "My hat's off to you. Marines do a lot to stay in shape. This is one of them.

"I've had Marines tell me that physical training (at Marine boot camp) is pretty easy compared to what they did in North Alabama. We are closing the gap and that's a gift to you. You've trained hard and I know all of you will make it ... We will make you into good Marines. You will win the nation's battles. And then we will return you as a good citizens back to the country."



Photo by Kari Hawkins

Future Marines, known as "poolees," participate in a HUMP, a "fast hike" with rucksacks, under the command of Gunnery Sgt. Damian Cason during a poolee event Friday in John Hunt Park. The six-mile hike took the poolees through wooded and hilly areas bordering the park adjacent to the Kilo Battery headquarters on Memorial Parkway.

A “poolee” is a recruit who has signed up to be a Marine and who is waiting to be in the "pool" of the next batch to go to Marine boot camp, which is Parris Island, S.C., for those in the eastern U.S. Many of the poolees at Friday’s HUMP will be leaving for boot camp in the next couple of months.

Dillion Oakley of Hatton High School chose the Marines “to be part of an elite group, to be part of something bigger than myself.”

During his preparations, he’s met other future Marines who were recruited by the Decatur recruiting station, including Daiquan Brown of Decatur High School, who participated in his high school’s Marine JROTC program.

“I really like the brotherhood and the service to country. I needed a good challenge and this is it,” Brown said.



Photo by Kari Hawkins
Gunnery Sgt. Jason Ferguson has a chat with a few Marine recruits before taking them out on a six-mile fast hike around John Hunt Park.

Both will report to Marine boot camp on July 25 while the Seagrave sister and brother will leave for boot camp July 15.

“Since 9/11 I’ve wanted to go into service for my country,” Ronald Seagrave said.

“We’re going in earlier than we expected,” added Meghan Seagrave. “They called and asked if I could move mine up to July 11 and I said ‘Yes, as long as my brother can come then, too.’”

The two enjoy competing against each other, although they have chosen different career fields. Meghan Seagrave will be in logistics while her brother will serve in special forces.

Tyler Donelson of Bob Jones High School is another poolee going to boot camp July 11. He will pursue a Marine Reserve career with the artillery.

“I chose the Marines because they don’t lower their standard for anyone. They have the attitude that ‘I’m the best.’ They’re not given anything. They have to earn it,” said Donelson, an Eagle Scout.

Following their hike, the poolees got to spend some time with their families at a picnic hosted by Blue Star Mothers.

“I’m real happy for him,” Holly Hinkle, mom of Dylan Esterling, said. “I know he’s real happy. He was searching for something to do and when he found this there was no turning back.”

That was the same for Matthew Vaden, who graduated from Whitesburg Christian Academy.

“He really didn’t know what he wanted to do with his future,” his mom Linda Vaden said. “But he didn’t want to waste his future either, and he wanted to do something that would give him discipline and a lot of job experience, and something that would help pay for college. This will help him to better know his career desires. And it’s an honorable thing to serve your country.”

Brenda Moss of Blue Star Mothers congratulated the parents on supporting their child’s decision to join the Marines, saying “there is no greater privilege than to have a son or daughter serving.”



Student adventures

Redstone Test Center actively supports Outreach Educational Opportunities by hosting a group of students who were part of the Adventures at AMCOM in June.

Courtesy photo

Education outreach

Mary Epps of AMCOM reads to students at University Place School as part of the Army Education Outreach Program.

Courtesy photo



Bright future in store for annual scholarship winners

*Commissary honors
six local recipients*

By Skip Vaughn

AMCOM/Garrison Public and Congressional Affairs

The morning rain June 28 didn't dampen this annual ceremony inside the Commissary.

Six students received the 2011 Scholarships for Military Children, an award of \$1,500 each. The scholarship, sponsored by vendors and administered by Fisher House Foundation, is among many programs initiated by the Defense Commissary Agency to involve commissaries even more deeply in the fabric of the military community. This year's sponsor is Pactiv/E-Z Foil.

"The Scholarships for Military Children is one way to show we care," Redstone's store director Robin Daniel said.

The Garrison's Command Sgt. Maj. Rick Cooper congratulated the recipients, wished them luck at college and added some advice. "Have fun but study," he said.

Store administrator Alfred Crawford advised, "Stay focused and follow your dreams."

Each year the scholarships are open to qualified sons and daughters of U.S. military ID cardholders including active duty, retirees, National Guard and Reserve members. Graduating high school seniors, as well as students enrolled in a four-year program, are eligible to apply. A minimum 3.0 grade point average and demonstration of community involvement are among the requirements for consideration. Each recipient also writes a required essay on an assigned topic.

"I'd like to congratulate the recipients," Glenn Huovinen, Pactiv/E-Z Foil representative, said. "It takes a lot of work to get here. We appreciate your efforts."

The six recipients included Nikole Jones, a freshman at Auburn majoring in microbiology; Cathryn Schartung, a sophomore at Auburn in chemical engineering; Tamela McGraw, a senior at Auburn in biomedical sciences; Jessica Clegg, a freshman at Carson-Newman in nursing; Bryce St. Clair, a freshman at Ohio State in pre-optometry; and Michael Logsdon, a sophomore at University of Alabama-Huntsville in meteorology.

"Thank you very much for awarding me this scholarship," St. Clair said. "I promise to give you a return on your investment."

McGraw was unable to attend the ceremony because she is taking physics and physiology this summer at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. She was represented by her parents.



Photo by Skip Vaughn

The scholarship recipients include, from left, Michael Logsdon, Nikole Jones, Jessica Clegg, Cathryn Schartung and Bryce St. Clair. Not pictured is Tamela McGraw.

Army Emergency Relief celebrates \$266K

*Fund-raising drive succeeds
despite weather interruption*

By Skip Vaughn

AMCOM/Garrison Public and Congressional Affairs

The Army's annual fund-raising drive overcame a tragic twist of fate this year.

The deadly tornadoes April 27 occurred midway through the Army Emergency Relief campaign scheduled March 1 through May 31.

But the Redstone community pulled together and AER raised \$266,852, more than \$1,800 over last year's \$265,000. The total fell short of the goal for a 10 percent increase.



Photo by Skip Vaughn

Lt. Gen. Richard Formica, commander of the Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, thanks the AER contributors. At left is Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Turner of SMDC/ARSTRAT; and at right is AER manager Kathleen Riester of Army Community Service.

“Soldiers and families will benefit and we appreciate it very much,” Lt. Gen. Richard Formica, commander of the Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, said during Thursday’s AER recognition ceremony at Bob Jones Auditorium.

Twenty-seven organizations held more than 120 fund-raisers during the campaign. Twenty-two were represented during the ceremony where they received certificates of appreciation for their contributions and support.

Formica, presiding officer for the event, also recognized the campaign’s three leaders: AER manager Kathleen Riester of Army Community Service; chairman Capt. Blair Tighe and co-chairman Staff Sgt. Nicholas Race.

“The money that we raised and the contributions that we give go to a good cause,” Formica said.

This year’s AER theme was “Helping to Make Soldiers and Their Families Army Strong.”

Army Emergency Relief assists Soldiers and their families in time of emergency financial need. In 2010 at Redstone, AER helped 324 Soldiers and family members with more than \$337,000 in loans and grants. Armywide last year, AER helped more than 66,000 Soldiers and families with more than \$77 million.

AER does the following:

- Helps with emergency financial needs for food, rent or utilities, emergency transportation and vehicle repair, funeral expenses and medical/dental expenses.
- Provides college scholarships to children, spouses and surviving spouses of Soldiers. Last year at Redstone, 40 people received a combined \$60,300 in scholarships.
- Offers additional benefits including lifetime membership in the Armed Forces Services Corporation for surviving families of Soldiers who die on active duty; grants for wounded Soldiers medically evacuated from a theater of combat; and personal financial management training for Soldiers in AIT.

Those eligible for Army Emergency Relief include: active duty Soldiers, single or married, and their family members; Army National Guard or Army Reserve Soldiers on continuous active duty for more than 30 days and their family members; Soldiers retired from active duty for longevity or physical disability, and their family members; Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers who retired at age 60, and their family members; and surviving spouses and orphans of Soldiers who died while on active duty or after they retired.

Redstone represented at Paris Air Show

PARIS – U.S. military pride, civilian pride, industry pride, equipment and technology were on display at the 49th International Paris Air Show at the Le Bourget Airport June 20-26.

“The Paris Air Show was USASAC’s platform to meet with and educate our audiences by explaining how we conduct FMS and what their country’s needs are,” Robert Moore, deputy commander for the Security Assistance Command and its lead for the event, said.

The Paris Air Show is held every two years, and provides an opportunity for the U.S. to display the best the Department of Defense has to offer in people, aircraft, equipment and training in an international setting. USASAC personnel, acting as the “Army’s Face to the World,” also managed and helped man the U.S. Army exhibit.

Various models of U.S. military aircraft and equipment and approximately 100 aircrew and support personnel from bases in Europe and the U.S. supported this event.

“The U.S. military and its aircraft are engaged in operations and training all over the globe,” Moore said. “We are here to strengthen our current relationships and build new relationships while fostering and promoting

international cooperation.”

Aircraft on static display at the show included the Air Force’s F-15E Strike Eagle, F-16 Fighting Falcon, C-130J Super Hercules and C-17 Globe master III; the Army’s RQ-7 Shadow unmanned aircraft system; and the Marine Corps’ AH-1Z Zulu and UH-1Y Yankee.

Additionally, the Air Force’s C-5M Super Galaxy, the Army’s CH-47F Chinook and the MQ-9 Predator B (Guardian) unmanned aircraft system, operated by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Coast Guard for the Department of Homeland Security, made a first appearance at the Paris Air Show.

Program Executive Office for Aviation also maintained a presence at the Army exhibit. Program executive offices are part of the Army’s security assistance enterprise and are a critical part of the Army’s foreign military sales process which USASAC leads.

“Our presence at the Paris Air Show gives USASAC the chance to showcase equipment and helps promote the military’s ties with NATO and other international partners and demonstrates to a large audience that U.S. industry is producing the type of equipment that will be critical to the success of current and future military operations,” Moore said. “In one sense, it’s a manner of conducting defense cooperation and furthering the security goals of our nation, as well as building upon the bilateral relationships already established.”

People who stopped by the U.S. aircraft corral had the opportunity to see all the aircraft up close. Each servicemember was ready to tell visitors about the aircraft they fly and maintain.

“I’m honored to tell the USASAC story, to represent USASAC and the United States in an international setting,” Michelle Voeller, USASAC public and congressional affairs, said.

According to Moore, the size and scale of the Paris Air Show is probably what makes this event stand out from other overseas air shows in which the U.S. participates. *(USASAC release)*



Photo by Michelle Voeller

Lt. Col. David Bristol from PEO Aviation points to a scale model of the LH-72 Lakota on display at the U.S. Army exhibit at the 49th International Paris Air Show as USASAC’s Robert Moore and Sgt. Maj. William Kaundart look on.

Army ombudsman makes difference with industry

Richardson retires from position that kept open communication

By Kari Hawkins

AMCOM/Garrison Public and Congressional Affairs

With 27 years of experience related to Army acquisition and business management, Randy Richardson was an easy pick back in 2004 for the Aviation and Missile Command’s ombudsman position.

Since then, Richardson, who actually wrote the guidelines for the ombudsman’s responsibilities in the late 1980s, has been helping AMCOM’s industry partners understand the ins and outs of Army contracting.

The job can often seem daunting; with Richardson working long hours to answer industry questions, address contracting issues, and keep the communication lines open between AMCOM and industry partners.

But if the job’s done right, it can be very rewarding.

“It’s about talking with industry about what’s right, what’s wrong and what’s not working,” Richardson said. “The mission is to communicate with industry, and to make sure industry knows what we’re doing and how they can help us support Soldiers.

“Open dialogue is real important because industry is our partner. The Army team is Soldiers, civilians and contractors. It’s a team effort. It’s important to make sure we keep that communication with industry open so

each of us understands how to support the Soldier better. It's a great opportunity to be the AMCOM ombudsman. This job gave me an opportunity to make a difference."

But as of July 1, Richardson is no longer one of the few ombudsmen in the Army. He has retired to join his wife, Ellen, who is also retiring as a contract specialist with the Lower Tier Project Office, Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space, in a new chapter of their lives. With their three children grown, the couple are considering some new options and perhaps a slower pace of life.

"Together, we've had 67 or 68 years combined federal service," Richardson said. "We both have an opportunity to retire, so it just seemed like the right time. We've loved our jobs, and working for the best Army in the world and the best Army team. It doesn't get any better than this."

Richardson grew up in Redstone Arsenal's acquisition community. A graduate of the University of Tennessee, he had set his sights on a promising career in retail when the Army came calling. He had scored high on the Professional Administrative Career Examination, a standard civil service test given at the university, and Redstone Arsenal was interested.



Photo by Kari Hawkins

Randy Richardson is saying goodbye to a 34-year Army civil service career that has included work in acquisition and business management. Since 2004, he has served as the Aviation and Missile Command's ombudsman.

"Back then, if they had an opening that fit you, they would call you," Richardson said. "I was contacted by Roland Volk (a government employee well-known for recruiting college graduates for the Army). It's kind of ironic because 20 years later he was helping me find interns to hire. He helped with 300 to 400 interns that came into acquisition here."

It was a cold day in January 1977 when Richardson reported to work at Redstone Arsenal.

"I saw the job as an opportunity to learn something," he said of his position as an acquisition intern. "The third year of my internship, I got to work for the chief of the contracting office. Then his deputy got deployed, and I got to do a lot that gave me great insight into what happens in the contracting world."

At the time, Redstone's mission was focused on missiles with missile programs divided under two Army commands -- the Readiness Command, and the Research and Development Command -- that reported to the Army Materiel Development and Readiness Command. Richardson was part of the team that consolidated the two subordinate commands in 1979 into the Missile Command.

In every challenge he was presented, Richardson was in a position to learn a lot about how the government does business.

"I bought spares, TOW systems and the first laser site for a TOW missile to go on a Cobra helicopter," Richardson recalled.

"I ran the team that bought Pershing spares, and we were redesigning and deploying Pershings to Germany all at the same time. The Pershing helped to dissolve the Soviet Union. It was such a tremendous weapon system and Russians wanted them gone from Europe."

When he wasn't negotiating and writing contracts, Richardson was working in business analysis, helping to report on budget resources, overseeing manpower functions and working toward automation in the work force.

"I was involved in the Business Management Function, helping to move us to a paperless contracting environment, hiring interns, and taking apart a work force and putting it back together again" with the merging of the Missile Command and the Aviation and Troop Command in St. Louis.

At the time, in 1997 during the Reagan-Bush era, there were more than 900 employees working in missile contracting at Redstone and about 600 working in contracting at the Aviation and Troop Command. With Base Realignment and Closure recommendations, those two organizations were consolidated and the contracting work force had to be reduced to 700.

"We were involved in a major restructuring of the Army, and in the middle of that we were fighting Desert Storm," Richardson said. "We got the aviation and missile commands consolidated, but we didn't have much time to get back on track before 9/11."

“Since then, there has been such a demand all over for people who can do federal contracting. We spend almost \$30 billion in federal contracting in North Alabama (for all of Team Redstone). By itself, AMCOM has about \$20 billion of that. There’s a tremendous demand for the contracting skill.”

Richardson served as AMCOM’s second ombudsman, following after John Vickers. No matter who holds the job, they are given the privilege and responsibility of representing AMCOM’s commanding general to industry.

“We are part of the command group and the commanding general’s voice to industry,” he said. “At the time we created this position, there wasn’t a lot of communication between industry and contractors. The government tended to keep their contractors an arm’s length away.

“But as the commander’s voice, I’ve spoken with industry on behalf of two aviator commanding generals – (then) Maj. Gen. Jim Pillsbury and Maj. Gen. Jim Myles – who understood the 24/7 mission. They knew what the fight was all about and the mission we had to do. Now, with Maj. Gen. Jim Rogers, he understands what the Army and AMCOM need to do to bring down the size, and to become more efficient and effective.”

AMCOM does business with more than 3,000 contractors annually. Richardson said he has meetings with 100 to 200 of those contractors each year, and often represents AMCOM at business conferences.

“The commanding generals and their deputies have allowed me to use my skills to keep communication open with industry,” Richardson said. “I’ve been able to put his voice out in the contracting community without interfering in the commanding generals’ and the deputies’ abilities to run the command and support Soldiers.”

Even with an open door policy, Richardson said there is a growing concern among industry about how the federal government is doing business. The last 18 months have been busier than ever for the AMCOM ombudsman’s office.

“The economy is so tough, every single contract we issue means jobs, and sometimes those contracts mean whether a company succeeds or not,” he said. “It’s a lot more intense as unemployment has gone up and contracts have gone down.

“The answers we give industry may not always be what they want to hear. But, hopefully, we can give them an answer to their questions and keep communication lines open. We want to make sure they understand the Army’s decisions so that we can all be good at supporting Soldiers.”

And hopefully, that communication will reduce the number of contracting protests filed by industry.

“Protests across the government have been higher in the last couple years because every contract means jobs,” Richardson said.

With a long Redstone Arsenal career behind them, Richardson and his wife are looking forward to making future plans, which include continuing to live in Madison.

“It’s time for us to do something else,” he said. “I don’t know what, but I want to use what I know to help industry support Soldiers. When you’ve been part of the Army this long it becomes part of your life. Supporting Soldiers is not just something you talk about. It’s something you believe in.”



Resource managers

The Redstone/Huntsville Chapter of the American Society of Military Comptrollers inducted its 2011-12 officers June 16 at Trinity Methodist Church. From left are Judy Smith, recording secretary; Michelle Cobb, corresponding secretary; Becky Lake, vice president; Lisa Lowry, president; and Charlie Barnes, 2002-03 chapter president. Not pictured are Dana Wilbanks, treasurer, and Karen Carden, assistant treasurer.

Courtesy photo

Alabama A&M alumni honor AMRDEC director

Eric Edwards, director of the Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center, was honored at the Alabama A&M University Alumni Association Inc., Huntsville Progressive Alumni Chapter's 10th annual Leadership Awards Banquet.

The annual event recognizes distinguished leaders in the Huntsville-Madison County Community for outstanding and extraordinary professional contributions to the community and raises funds to support scholarships for students at Alabama A&M University.

Edwards received the Leadership Award in Government and Industry in recognition of his outstanding professional contributions to the community and his unwavering commitment and support to the Army Educational Outreach Program.

As director of AMRDEC, with an annual budget of \$2.3 billion, Edwards is responsible for providing major research, development, production, field engineering, software engineering and product assurance support to numerous Aviation and Missile Command projects and product-managed systems, as well as to the Department of Defense and other federal government customers.

Edwards leads a team of more than 3,000 government employees who plan and execute AMRDEC research programs and conduct advanced development of aviation, missile and unmanned system technology.



Courtesy photo

Deloris Smothers, president of the Alabama A&M University Alumni Association Inc., Huntsville Progressive Alumni Chapter, presents the Leadership Award in Government and Industry to Eric Edwards, director of the Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center.

Career development programs shape foreign military sales

*Resource management trainee
represents new generation*

By Elisabeth Sikes

For USASAC Public Affairs

The Army's "Face to the World" just got a little younger. By utilizing a number of internship and career development programs, the Security Assistance Command is fostering a new age of government employee. These programs, available to college students and recent college graduates of all ages are helping to prepare participants for a career with the government.

Programs currently in effect at USASAC include the Student Temporary Education Program, Student Career Experience Program, Students Working at the Army in Parallel and the AMC Fellows Program. USASAC's unique security assistance and foreign military sales mission do not fall into a traditional job category; so many employees gain their experience through specific security assistance training courses and on-the-job experience. This makes the command the perfect organization for developmental programs, according to Gale Fenwick, chief, training division, USASAC G1/8.

Robert Anderson, working at USASAC in G1/8 (Resource Management), is one employee utilizing a developmental program. Anderson graduated from the University of Nevada-Reno with a bachelor's in economics and finance in 2008. After hearing about the Army Materiel Command fellows program from a family member, he decided to apply. Following a "long, rigorous interview process," he was accepted into the program just a few months shy of the birth of his first child.



Photo by Melody Sandlin

Robert Anderson is learning the foreign military sales process through a developmental career program with the Security Assistance Command.

“It was a pretty crazy time,” Anderson said.

After his graduation, Anderson moved to Texarkana, Texas, with his family and earned a master’s in business administration before beginning his on-the-job training rotations at Redstone Arsenal. After working at headquarters Army Materiel Command G8 and at the Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space for his first two rotations, Anderson came to USASAC G1/8. In this position, Anderson said he has learned a lot about basic foreign military sales administration processes, customer accounts and billing processes as a part of USASAC’s mission. Once finished with his rotational assignments, Anderson will settle into his permanent duty location in headquarters AMC G8 Systems Account and Policy Division. Because FMS requires customer funding, learning the regulations and processes is crucial to executing cases in a timely manner, so his time in G8 proved to be a valuable experience.

Anderson said the development programs and its new generation of government employee “offers a different approach, a different view of how to do things, instead of just doing them a certain way because ‘that’s the way it’s always been done.’”

And for Anderson, the benefits of his developmental program are not limited to the training.



Executive diploma

Linda Dohrn, a liaison officer in Hawaii for the Army Security Assistance Command, graduates June 15 from the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies “Executive Course: Advanced Security Cooperation” course. Dohrn receives her diploma from APCSS director Ed Smith, a retired lieutenant general. Dohrn joined 80 other senior military and civilian government leaders from 34 countries and territories who attended the six-week course to study regional security.

APCSS Photo/Visual Information

Quarterly retirements

Brig. Gen. Ole Knudson, program executive officer for aviation, presents a retirement certificate to 1st Sgt. Albert Rocker Jr. during the quarterly retirement ceremony June 28 at Bob Jones Auditorium. The other retiring Soldiers included Chief Warrant Officer 4 Scott Romiza, 1st Sgt. Delwin Underwood, Sgt. 1st Class Kelley Hall, Sgt. 1st Class Steven Walker and Staff Sgt. Anthony Crutch.

Photo by Skip Vaughn



Aviation sendoff

Lt. Col. Jennifer Jensen accepts the retirement certificate presented by Maj. Gen. Tim Crosby, program executive officer for aviation, during her retirement ceremony at Bob Jones Auditorium June 28. Jensen retires after 22 years in the Army, finishing as Common Systems Integration product manager. She and her family will remain in Huntsville.

Photo by Sofia Bledsoe

Aviation offices recognize leadership changes

Three aviation organizations have new leaders after separate ceremonies last week at Bob Jones Auditorium.

Lt. Col. Mike Rutkowski succeeded Lt. Col. Kevin Mobley as the product manager for Air Traffic Control Systems.

Lt. Col. James Kennedy succeeded Lt. Col. Jennifer Jensen as the product manager for Common Systems Integration.

Col. Thomas Todd III succeeded Col. Neil Thurgood as the project manager for Utility Helicopters.

Program executive officer for aviation Maj. Gen. Tim Crosby, middle, passes the colors to Col. Thomas Todd III, left, symbolizing the passing of authority and responsibility from Col. Neil Thurgood, right, outgoing project manager for Utility Helicopters, to Todd during a change of charter ceremony June 29 in Bob Jones Auditorium.

Photo by Sofia Bledsoe



Unmanned aircraft systems forum fosters trust

By Sofia Bledsoe

PEO Aviation Public Affairs

TUCSON, Ariz. – More than 400 attendees flocked the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Warfighter Forum from June 21-24 in Tucson, Ariz. Now in its 11th forum, the invitation-only gathering is an annual opportunity for



Photo by Stephanie Johnson

Maj. Gen. Tim Crosby, program executive officer for aviation, speaks at the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Warfighter Forum in Tucson, Ariz. June 23.

attendees to confer openly with each other and discuss issues to identify what the Army has done right, what it can improve, and encourages the free flow of ideas, all in support of the Soldier.

“This forum is focused on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency and the actual employment of UAS,” Tim Owings, UAS deputy project manager, said. “It’s a very unique venue in that we bring together active war fighter, national guardsmen, acquisition professionals, other government agency professionals and our original equipment manufacturers to have this open dialogue and exchange of information. A lot of good information has come out of this.”

Sgt. Maj. Loren Gray, operations and force design director from Fort Rucker and first-time attendee, said the most-value added aspect of attending the forum was the opportunity to learn how each organization and what it does affects other people. “Sometimes it is easy to get caught up in your own mission that you forget the ramifications of a

decision that your organization has made,” he said.

Because Gray manages personnel, his main concern with the explosive growth of UAS is how it affects people. “How does that widget affect the Army? Are there enough trainers and equipment to support the training mission? How does it all sync? That’s why I’m so glad we’re all able to talk to one another and meet face-to-face in the same place at one time which has really helped to support my organization’s own mission.”

Attendees included UAS operators from 19 units including Army National Guard and Marine Corps representatives, 20 Army and DoD organizations, four other government agencies, and five of the UAS Project Office original equipment manufacturers.

During his keynote speech, Maj. Gen. Tim Crosby, program executive officer for aviation, called UAS “revolutionary.”

“We’re not buying anything new except for UAS,” Crosby said. The way the Army thinks, fights and engages with the enemy has evolved since the inception of UAS and has made the Army even more efficient and effective.

“What I’m really proud of is that they brought UAS and put them under back into PEO Aviation that allows that synergy across all platforms,” Crosby said. He elaborated on the efficiencies brought on by the teaming of manned and unmanned aircraft that is driving the way the Army fights. “There are so many aspects and potential that this team deserves all the credit and has enabled this great thing to happen.”

Owings shared some highlights in the past year, including the Common Systems Integration Product Office, which is leading the efforts for the Manned-Unmanned Systems Integration Capabilities exercise scheduled Sept. 16 at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah. They’ve successfully completed ROVER-6 design verification test with National Safety Agency oversight. The ROVER 6 is the next generation of ROVER portable radios that transforms sensor-to-shooter networking and allows increased levels of collaboration and interoperability. In addition, the office is also supporting the Kiowa Warrior Product Office with their Level 2 Manned-Unmanned integration, which means that the pilots in the cockpit can view feeds from nearby unmanned aircraft systems in real time.

In April, construction was completed for the new Hunter and Warrior hangars at the Rapid Integration and Acceptance Center at Dugway Proving Ground. Since its groundbreaking ceremony in October 2009, the RIAC has supported numerous off-axis test events, some of which include the Heterogeneous Airborne Reconnaissance Team system – which enables Soldiers to collect video from aircraft and display it on

Project office shares plans for unmanned aircraft

By Sofia Bledsoe

PEO Aviation Public Affairs

TUCSON, Ariz. – For the first time during a Warfighter Forum, the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Project Office took a few moments to speak with news media members and talk about program accomplishments, current projects and what Soldiers can expect to operate in the coming months.

In a teleconference call, Tim Owings, deputy project manager for UAS, led the discussion accompanied by four of his product managers and three UAS operators.

“We continue to fly at a very high optempo with over 1.2 million flight hours, 90 percent of those continue to be in combat operations,” Owings said. Despite the drawdown in Iraq, the Army has more than made up for that decrease in Afghanistan where UAS operators fly about 250,000 flight hours a year.

The Small UAS Product Office is conducting a surge push of 180 additional Raven systems in Afghanistan, according to product manager Cliff Brandt. He leads the effort in increasing the distribution from 15 systems per Brigade Combat Team to 35 systems. “Support personnel are already on the ground in theater in preparation for the surge, which will kick off in July,” Brandt said.

Route clearance patrols have also begun for Brandt’s other platform, the Puma. “We have 72 systems on the ground right now, soon to be 84 by August,” he said, adding that his team has completed more than half of the training and fielding required. The process has been slower than he would like, but he recognized that the task is difficult when the Army has to pull Soldiers out of the fight to train them.

An additional surge is also taking place by direction of the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter Chiarelli. Spc. Dean Dawes, a Raven and Puma operator with the 4th Infantry BCT and recently returned from deployment to northeast Afghanistan, said that data collected from combat experiences in theater prompted the Army’s decision for a surge push.

“The Puma allowed the battalion commanders to operate with a generic asset they didn’t otherwise have,” Dawes said. “We were also able to accurately call for fire with one adjustment and accurately hit targets.”



UAS operators receive training on the MQ-5B Hunter system at the UAS Training Battalion Center at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. The Hunter UAS is used in support of Army Aerial Exploitation Battalion for reconnaissance, surveillance, target and acquisition and is the Army’s longest serving corps/division level UAS. The Hunter’s imagery system allows data to be processed in a matter of seconds, providing virtual, real-time information of battlefield conditions/targets.

Photo by Sofia Bledsoe

their mobile computing devices – damage tolerance test of the Shadow which proved the aircraft’s capability in flight even after portions of the wing was blown off; Hellfire tests from the Gray Eagle, and many others.

In May, the Army became the first service authorized to begin night flights of a UAV. The Army’s first flight was with the Gray Eagle using the Ground-Based Sense and Avoid System at El Mirage, Calif. Under a certificate of authorization with the Federal Aviation Administration, the project office, in coordination with the FAA, the Army Airworthiness Authority and General Atomics, has collected significant data from the flights which will be another great step for Army UAS to fly in national airspace.

“We continue to fly at a very high optempo with over 1.2 million flight hours, 90 percent of those continue to be in combat operations,” Owings said. “The major points for all of this is that the demand for UAS is continuing to increase whether we’re talking additional ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) roles or in attack missions but really across the spectrum we’re seeing increasing uses of systems. The technologies for the next generation of stuff are starting to come to fruition and allow us to advance ourselves into things like 4G networks, smart phones and lower cost ways of producing end product to dislocated users.”

In addition, as the Army continues to train more Soldiers, they are also learning a lot about these systems and are very open in the exchange of information to make them better. “For us, the Army has come a long way for UAS but it is still in its infancy in terms of what’s going to be happening over the course of the next few years,” Owings said.

Crosby encouraged the audience to take advantage of the opportunity to learn from representatives in other services and organizations. “What we’re talking about is that bond of trust,” he said. “Learn from your brothers in the other services and build on those synergies to make these systems better.”

Helpers deliver smiles to the troops

*Care packages with treats
sent to Soldiers overseas*

By Megan Cotton

AMCOM/Garrison Public and Congressional Affairs

For Kiley Kinzer-Henry bringing a smile to U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan has become a full-time job.

Kinzer-Henry is the driving force behind A Smile For Troops, an organization that sends care packages to Soldiers. Unlike most care packages though, A Smile For Troops doesn’t send shampoo, toothpaste or body soap. They send toys and foods.

“We want to send them little fun treats like Capri Suns, Chinese yo-yos, and homemade cookies and brownies,” Kinzer-Henry said. “We just want to send them really silly little things that just give them a little break from their day-to-day work.”

The organization started in 2009 when Kinzer-Henry’s husband was deployed for a six-month tour to Iraq and she would send him care packages.

“When I would send care packages to my husband, he would share a lot of it with those who didn’t get packages. It just broke my heart to think about those Soldiers who weren’t receiving any care packages. I started including more baked goods for guys who I knew weren’t getting anything,” she said. “Then at Costco I saw a pack of Conversation Hearts for Valentine’s Day and thought it would be fun. So, with the help for my friend Amy Summers, we put together a care package for every Soldier.”

From there A Smile For Troops was born. Kinzer-Henry and her volunteers have mailed 200 packages five times a year since 2009. The nearly 4,000 packages have been delivered to camps throughout Iraq and Afghanistan.

They are always looking for additional help and donations to help fund the organization.

“Ten or twenty dollars really goes a long way,” Kinzer-Henry said about paying for postage and the treats. “We’re really hoping to get a corporate sponsor and to get the word out more so we can file for nonprofit status. We always need help. The more help and donations we get the more help we can provide to the troops.”

Until then though Kinzer-Henry will keep providing as many care packages as she can to the Soldiers.

“I just want to do anything I can to make them smile for a little while and give them a break from their day,” she said.

To find out how you can help or donate, visit www.asmilefortroops.com.

Top NCO, Soldier named after weeklong competition

By Carrie E. David

SMDC/ARSTRAT Public Affairs

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – The top noncommissioned officer and Soldier from the Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command’s 2011 NCO and Soldier of the Year competition have been named.

Staff Sgt. Andrew Brown, 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion, has been named the NCO of the Year; and Spc. Brandon Kitchen, Company B, 53rd Signal Battalion, is the Soldier of the Year.



Photo by Carrie E. David

Spc. Brandon Kitchen, Company B, 53rd Signal Battalion, is the Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command’s Soldier of the Year. Kitchen was the Soldier of the Year from the command’s Eastern Region.

“I’m excited and surprised,” Kitchen said. “There was so much knowledge among these Soldiers, I’m honored to have been able to compete and still come out on top.”

Brown said he was surprised also.

“I’m surprised and speechless,” Brown said. “This is such a wonderful group of Soldiers. I’m honored to compete with these guys. Now, we go back and complete the mission.”

Kitchen said the easiest event for him was the run portion of the Army Physical Fitness Test.

“I’m originally from Colorado, so I had an advantage,” Kitchen said. “It didn’t take me very long to acclimate to the altitude.”

Brown said the hardest event for him was the situational exercise.

“We had such a small squad for such a large mission, and there was so much gunfire,” Brown said. “It really pushed me to my limit.”

The winners will now compete in the Department of the Army’s Best Warrior competition at Fort Lee, Va., in October.



Photo by Carrie E. David

Staff Sgt. Andrew Brown, 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion, is the Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command’s Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. Brown was the NCO of the Year from the command’s Western Region.

UAH team seeks tornado photos, video

Scientists studying the April 27 storms that killed more than 230 people in Alabama and the Southeast are looking for pictures and video of the tornadoes.

Pictures and video of the tornadoes and the storms that spawned them will be used to learn more about the deadly storms, how they developed and how to improve warnings to the public.

“We are interested in getting as much visible data as possible from that day, both video and stills,” Dr. Kevin Knupp, a professor of atmospheric science at the University of Alabama-Huntsville, said. “If anyone shot pictures or video of the tornadoes, that material could be very valuable to our work.”

“We would like to be able to identify the various visual aspects of the storms,” said Knupp, who leads UAH’s severe weather research team. “Some of the tornadoes were highly visible, while others were rain wrapped. Having a picture can give us valuable links between a tornado’s intensity, the surrounding cloud formations and the corresponding radar information.”

Storm photos and video will be compared to radar data, detailed tornado track surveys and other data.

Anyone willing to share their photographs or video of the storms can contact Knupp at tornado@nsstc.uah.edu. In addition to the pictures, scientists need to know the photographer's location when a picture was taken, the time it was taken and the general direction the camera was pointed.

All information received will be confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Photos and video will be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings and conferences only with the photographer's written permission.

The photo/video analysis of the April 27 storms follows the successful analysis of about 500 photographs and 20 video clips of a Jan. 21, 2010, tornado that hit Huntsville. Compiled and organized by an undergraduate student, that analysis proved that "civilian" images can provide useful information about storm genesis. Preliminary results of that work were presented at the American Meteorological Society's Conference on Severe Local Weather in October. (UAH release)

Army Guard members save school from flood

By Sgt. Darron Salzer

National Guard Bureau

MINOT, N.D. – When Capt. Gary Ripplinger and his Soldiers received the call to save a local elementary school, they sprang into action and were on the scene and placing sandbags within 45 minutes.

Authorities had noticed that a dike around this town's only remaining elementary school that was high and dry had been eroding – and fast.

"(On June 26) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife were going through the area checking on things and found some (erosion) on one of the dikes surrounding one of the elementary schools in the area, so we were called out to place some one-ton sandbags," Ripplinger, 817th Engineer Company (Sapper) company commander, said.

"The reason the (erosion) was happening was because the velocity of the water coming down the street was hitting the embankment with such speed that it was actually starting to wear away at the embankment."

The unit placed about 40 sandbags the night of June 26 and stopped operations at about 1 a.m., Ripplinger said.

"(We) came back out at 8 a.m. (June 27) and identified that more (erosion) was happening, so we called up for some more one-ton sandbags," he explained. "Had we not done what we did this morning, I would say that by tonight, that school would have been inundated with water and would have been a total loss."

Support from civilian agencies and their boats helped ensure that his Soldiers could repair the dike and prevent it from being further compromised, he said.

"That is a great aspect about what the National Guard brings to local communities here in the nation and around the world," he said. "I'm glad we were here and able to help out in this emergency."

"We were able to save the school, and we believe the flood waters are now receding, so there should be no more issues with that embankment."



Photo by Sgt. Darron Salzer

An Army Guard UH-60 Black Hawk prepares to drop 1-ton sandbags on a dike to keep it from deteriorating any further June 27. The dike is the only thing holding back the floodwaters in Minot, N.D., from overtaking the elementary school, which is the only one in the city that remains dry.

Coalition transitions first buildings to Afghan control

By Tech. Sgt. Emily F. Alley

451st Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Afghan National Security Forces at Camp Hero, Kandahar province, were the first in Afghanistan to transition coalition-maintained buildings to complete Afghan control.

On July 1, 17 buildings were transitioned to Afghanistan's Department of Public Works.

The U.S.-built structures, which include dorms, showers, classrooms and storage space, have been used by Afghan National Security Forces as they train soldiers. The transition will provide a training ground for Afghan maintainers, who will be responsible for upkeep.

Many of the electricians, plumbers and other tradesmen have no professional experience, but are learning daily, said Theo Achoeman, a contractor who helps supervise the maintenance of the buildings.

“We’re at a critical stage because we’re teaching the guys who are going to be teachers in the future,” he said.

The 17 buildings are a fraction of the ANSF compound, which has many more structures waiting to transition to Afghan control during the next several months. An Afghan flag was painted on each transitioning building to distinguish it, and reinforce the idea of ownership.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Adrienne Brammer
An Afghan National Army soldier walks past several buildings June 25 that are now officially in Afghan possession at Camp Hero, Kandahar, Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

“It’s a visual reminder and it’s pride, too. I believe that the facility transfer is a necessary first step on the road to self-sufficiency and independence for the ANSF engineering teams,” Master Sgt. Thaddeus Gravely, a member of the Infrastructure Training and Advisory Group, said. “I also believe that given the fiscal realities faced in the United States, that this is the responsible thing to do.”

Prior to transition, the buildings were maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This first transition of 17 buildings is estimated to save the United States about \$630,000 annually in operations and maintenance costs, Gravely said.

More money will be saved during each round of transitions, until the compound is completely eased into Afghan control. With each of the stages, the new maintainers gain experience.

“I believe the realization that the buildings are their responsibility now has energized them,” Master Sgt. Michael Brimhall, another adviser to the ANSF, said. “It is good to see them taking an active role in facility upkeep.”

Although the final transition is not scheduled for several months, the advisers will be there not as supervisors, but as a resource to help their Afghan partners prepare to manage their facilities.

Army/Boeing unveil new defensive vehicle

By Jason Cutshaw
SMDC/ARSTRAT

The future is pointed forward like a laser as researchers find ways to support and defend the fighting men and women of America and its allies.

Boeing and members of Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command came together June 27 to show their support for the Army’s High Energy Laser Technology Demonstrator.

“We are very excited to be partnering with the Army on this program,” Dr. Greg Hyslop, Boeing Strategic Missile and Defense Systems vice president and general manager, said. “We believe that directed energy really is the next leap forward in weapons systems for the United States. Once we have harnessed the precision and power it is going to give our war fighters a tremendous advantage.”

Boeing recently completed system integration of key components for the HEL TD which included installation of the Beam Control System and critical hardware onto an Oshkosh Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck vehicle platform.

The system consists of mirrors, high-speed processors and high-speed optical sensors.

The HEL TD program's objective is to demonstrate in a relevant operational environment that a mobile solid state laser weapon system can provide an effective mission capability to counter rocket, artillery and mortar projectiles. Testing will take place at the Army's High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

"I want to thank the government and contracting team for their outstanding performance in designing, fabricating and integrating the High Energy Laser Technology Demonstrator," Dr. Michael Lavan, Emerging Technologies Directorate, SMDC/ARSTRAT Technical Center director, said. "We have taken a major step toward providing our war fighters a truly game-changing counter rockets, artillery and mortars vehicle."

HEL TD is a cornerstone of the Army's high-energy laser program and will support the transition of directed energy technologies to Army acquisition programs.

Soon the HEL TD will prepare for testing at White Sands Missile Range. The tests will demonstrate the system's ability to acquire, track and target moving projectiles.

In operation, HEL TD will acquire, track and select an aim point on a target. The system will receive the laser beam from the HEL TD laser device, reshape and align the beam and then focus it on the target.

"This is a huge deal," Mike Rinn, Boeing Directed Energy Systems vice president, said. "This represents about four years of hard work by the government and the Boeing team to build this demonstrator, but it also represents decades of technology maturation. It gives our war fighters an advantage with speed-of-light weapons, precise pointing and the promise of a potentially endless magazine.

"The design of this demonstrator is to do counter rocket, artillery and mortars, which it gives you an alternative to the kinetic ways to do that now with bullet against bullet. The advantages will be astounding."

HEL TD is a cornerstone of the Army's high-energy laser program and will support the transition of directed energy technologies to Army acquisition programs.

Funding and technology support for the Army's high energy laser program elements has been provided by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology and the High Energy Laser Joint Technology Office.

In July 2007, SMDC/ARSTRAT awarded a contract to Boeing to begin developing the initial phase for a truck-mounted laser weapon system that destroys rockets, artillery shells and mortar rounds. The Beam Control System mounted on the vehicle will go through initial testing and characterization at White Sands Missile Range.

Local company wins Fort Sill contract

Tec-Masters Inc. has been awarded a \$24.8 million five-year contract to provide systems engineering and technical assistance support to the Fires Center of Excellence at Fort Sill, Okla.

This is the fourth consecutive competitive contract award to TMI (previous awards were 1991, 1997 and 2003). This award is confirmation of understanding the customer and outstanding past performance.

TMI's Fires Division, located in Lawton, Okla., will execute and manage the SETA contract.

"This contract represents a major step forward in TMI's vision to continue and expand our business at Fort Sill and to support Soldiers," Hillary Brown, director of TMI Fires Division and the FCoE SETA contract deputy program manager, said. *(Tec-Masters Inc. release)*



Photo by Jason Cutshaw

Dr. Michael Lavan,
Emerging Technologies
Directorate,
SMDC/ARSTRAT
Technical Center director,
speaks at the unveiling of
the Army's High Energy
Laser Technology
Demonstrator June 27.

First Lady visits Vermont National Guard

By 1st Lt. Dyana K. Allenm

158th Fighter Wing

SOUTH BURLINGTON, Vt. – First Lady Michelle Obama visited hundreds of members of the Vermont National Guard and their families June 30 at the VTNG’s Army Aviation Support Facility in South Burlington, to thank military members and their families for their continued hard work.

“I come here today on behalf of a grateful nation to say two simple words that you all should hear every single day: Thank you. And I come here to celebrate the people who serve right alongside you without ever wearing a uniform: your amazing families, our heroes right here at home,” Obama said.

Obama spoke about the “Joining Forces” campaign, which recognizes, honors and serves military families. The intention is to help take care of troops and their families throughout the duration of deployment.

She spoke about the community of Hyde Park, who came together and did nationwide fund-raisers to build Pfc. Andrew Parker, an active-duty Soldier who was wounded in Afghanistan, a wheelchair-accessible apartment within his family’s home.

Obama also stressed that that the goal of her initiative is do whatever can be to done, join forces and ensure that every school supports and celebrates military children and supports military members.

“For her to join us in our great, little state of Vermont is a great honor,” Maj. Gen. Michael Dubie, the adjutant general, VTNG, said.

His words resounded with the Gold Star Family members. Regina Meckle, whose son Pfc. Kyle Gilbert was killed in action in Iraq in 2003, said that she is proud that the First Lady came to Vermont and she is proud to be an American. Her husband, Sgt. Herbert Meckle, said that he is very honored that Obama is showing support to the military.

The Merchant family, also a Gold Star Family, was curious to hear what Obama had to say. Janet Merchant, whose son, Spc. Christopher Merchant, was killed in Iraq in 2006, was very grateful that Obama was showing support for our troops.

Support did not only come from the White House and its staff. The event planning started over two weeks ago with intricate coordination required from the Secret Service, local police, local sheriff’s offices, the Department of Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Administration, all Air and Army National Guard Major Commands, Emergency Medical Services, the Red Cross, and the Vermont State Guard.

“There was a lot of hard work and extra hours put in by all parties involved in this effort, but it is a pleasure to welcome the First Lady,” Lt. Col. Dwight DeCoster, director of Military Support, said.

Capt. Rob Evans, assistant Field Force commander for the Vermont State Police, was also honored to welcome the First Lady to Vermont and is proud of our military and we all do together.

“It is a wonderful opportunity to work with the National Guard in events like this. With all the missions that we do together with all agencies, we seem to work seamlessly,” Evans said.

Obama has been traveling throughout the nation visiting servicemembers and their families to reassure military families of the deep appreciation of our nation and to demonstrate the importance of taking care of our military families during times of deployment.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dan DiPietro, 158th Fighter Wing
First Lady Michelle Obama visits Vermont expressing her appreciation to military families for the sacrifices they have made at the Vermont Army National Guard’s Aviation Support Facility, June 30.

Patients surveyed on Army health care

Fox Army Health Center is promoting the Army Provider Level Satisfaction Survey.

This comprehensive survey program is administered by the Office of the U.S. Army Surgeon General. The survey focuses on issues ranging from how the provider communicated with the patient during the visit to questions about access to care, cleanliness of the facility, and courtesy of the staff.

Patients are randomly mailed a letter asking them to complete a brief questionnaire regarding their care at Fox. There are three different ways a patient can fill out the questionnaire. The first is a short form survey of nine questions that uses a toll free number and a voice response system. The second method is utilizing a two-page written survey. The third method is an Internet based survey where the patients can log in with a username and a password, which is provided for the patient in the letter sent to them about the survey.

The confidential results of this survey are processed and trends are noted that provide immediate feedback for the leadership of Fox Army Health Center as well as the Office of the U.S. Army Surgeon General.

Why is the survey so important to Fox Army Health Center? First of all, your comments and concerns are always a top priority for every member of your Fox team as they continuously strive to provide the best health care for their patients. Secondly, Fox Army Health Center continuously maintains an impressive 93 percent overall patient satisfaction, and is currently among the top 5 percent of all Army medical treatment facilities. Each survey returned earns the organization \$100 in addition to being worth as much as \$500 if it reaches 96 percent overall patient satisfaction. Earnings go back into Fox to help better serve the beneficiaries, so be sure to fill out your surveys. *(Fox Army Health Center release)*

Holiday tree

Members of the associate director for aviation office in AMCOM's Integrated Materiel Management Center have a year-round tree that they decorate for each holiday, including the Fourth of July. "We change it every holiday," management support specialist Romona Rice says. From left are Lori Harting, Jeremy Bolton, Rice, Katie Shrek, Lori Moseley and Danielle Schager.

Photo by Skip Vaughn



Bongos anyone?

Margaret Seago of AMCOM's Integrated Materiel Management Center got a set of bongos from her husband, Alan, for her 54th birthday June 27. She welcomes anyone who'd like to get together for a jam session; and her phone number is 876-4381. "It's a great stress release," she says.

Photo by Skip Vaughn

Announcements

Sports/recreation

Football officials

The North Alabama Football Officials Association is in search of new officials. If you are interested, visit the website <http://nafoa.biz/dnn/> or call Bob Arnone 763-1796. The first meeting is July 10 at the Red Cross building, 1101 Washington St. New officials can be accepted until the last two weeks of the regular season.

Pagano Gym returns

Pagano Gym will reopen July 11 after the largest renovation project ever for the 1940s era building. The gym, closed the past 11 months, has been completely redone inside. Walls were knocked down and rooms were expanded. The gym will have an open house Friday, for tours only, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. It will be officially open for business July 11. Its hours are Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. – note the earlier closing time rather than 10 p.m.; Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Women's fitness

Belly Blast Fitness Boot Camp for Women will be held July 11 to Aug. 5 at Weatherly Heights Elementary School. The morning class is from 5:30-6:30 a.m. Monday through Friday; and the evening class is 5:30-6:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. All military spouses and government employees get a free copy of the nutrition program "21 Day Belly Blast" with boot camp signup. "Nobody gets left behind and everybody gets results," a prepared release said. "This camp is truly for all shapes, sizes and abilities." For more information, call Joe Martin 468-7146 or visit www.HuntsvilleBootCamp.com.

Boating safety class

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary boating safety class, Boating Skills and Seamanship, will begin Aug. 11 and run Thursdays from 6:30-9 p.m. at building 3687 on Neal Road. Cost is \$25 for the textbook. The course is to provide the boater with comprehensive understanding of safe boating operation and handling. For more information, call Tom Kunhart 830-6621 (home), 527-4475 (cell) or email tkunhart@knology.net.

Conferences/meetings

Weekly worship

The Contemporary Christian Worship Service is held each Sunday night at Bicentennial Chapel. Fellowship begins at 5 p.m. followed by Bible study at 5:30. The actual service starts at 6:15. Bicentennial Chapel is located on Goss Road, building 376. For more information, call the Garrison Unit Ministry Team 842-2176.

Sergeants major

The Sergeants Major Association conducts a monthly meeting every third Thursday of the month at 6:30 a.m. at the Community Activity Center. Breakfast is available at the Java Cafe. 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 information call retired Command Sgt. Maj. Reginald Battle 859-3784.

Men's ministries

Men's Ministries, "addressing the needs of men and planting seeds for spiritual growth in Christ Jesus," meets every second or third Saturday – for exact monthly date, call Harry Hobbs at 425-5307 – at 9 a.m. at the Redstone Links golf clubhouse. Breakfast is served for \$5. For more information, call Hobbs 425-5307.

Leadership summit

Cove Church is a host satellite location for Willowcreek's Global Leadership Summit on Aug. 11-12. "Through the Global Leadership Summit, you have access to a faculty lineup that brings incredible depth and breadth of leadership talent, perspective and insight," a prepared release said. "Gain practical, hands-on wisdom as some of the world's brightest leaders download their experiences and expertise." For more information and to register, visit willowcreek.com/summit.



Photo by David Kather

Children's outing

Lynn Nichols and Brett Bonnell, volunteers for the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Army Aviation Association of America, sign up children for the Free Children's Fishing Clinic on June 11 at the Col. Carroll D. Hudson recreation area. More than 130 youngsters participated in the event sponsored by Family and Morale Welfare and Recreation.

Tricare briefings

Humana Military Healthcare Services, the Tricare managed care support contractor for the South Region, holds informational briefings on Tricare every Monday at 1 p.m. and Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the Tricare Service Center, Fox Army Health Center, second floor.

Federal employees

The Huntsville/Madison County Chapter 443 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association will meet Saturday at the Thomas Davidson Senior Center, 2200 Drake Ave. Refreshments and social time starts at 9:30 a.m. with the business meeting at 10. The speaker is Keith Clines, who covers transportation issues for The Huntsville Times via the “Ask Us” column. For more information, call 508-8250 or 539-1333.

Parkinson’s support

The Parkinson’s Support Group of Huntsville will meet Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at Willowbrook Baptist Church, 7625 Bailey Cove Road. Dr. Harrison Walker from UAB will discuss “Deep Brain Stimulation for Parkinson’s Disease.” Family, friends and caregivers, as well as those with Parkinson’s disease, are invited. For more information, call Fred Seeley 534-6767.

Defense women

Women in Defense, Tennessee Valley Chapter, will present “Leadership Challenges in National Defense,” a half day workshop on the afternoon of Oct. 27 at the Marriott in Huntsville. The event will include a luncheon (with keynote speaker), afternoon focus panels and an evening reception. Speaking invitations to high-level government leadership have been extended. Additional workshop details to include agenda, registration information and sponsorship opportunities will be announced soon.

Miscellaneous

Civilian deployment

DA civilian volunteers are needed to support Aviation and Missile Command missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn. Skill sets needed include acquisition, maintenance, supply, quality assurance, operations, logistics and automation, among others. The new personnel deployment website is at the AMCOM homepage or <https://apdw.redstone.army.mil> for your use. Volunteers must be currently employed by AMCOM or AMC. Contractors cannot be considered. Department of Army civilians interested in deploying should notify their supervisor and visit the deployment website or call Eddie Allen 876-4106 or Lisa Glenn 876-2082. Contractors and others interested can access www.cpol.army.mil for openings and opportunities for overseas employment.

Fraud hotline

The Huntsville Fraud Resident Agency (USACIDC) has implemented a fraud hotline. It is designed to help you, the taxpayer, to report incidents of suspected fraud involving government contract companies, government employees or government agencies. If you suspect or know someone who either is committing, or has committed any type of fraud against the government on Redstone Arsenal, or surrounding area, report it by calling 876-9457. You do not have to leave your name – all information will remain confidential and anonymous. Please leave enough information so any follow up investigation can be completed.



Photo by Tommy Gilligan/West Point Public Affairs

West Point newcomer

R-Day 2011 activities began at about 6 a.m. June 27 and would culminate with the Oath Ceremony scheduled at 6:30 p.m. After a day of in-processing, including getting initial issue of many items, to include the uniforms they wear during the Oath Ceremony, learning to salute, learning to march in squads then platoons and then companies, the new cadets have a full day on their first day at West Point.

Education test center

Taking online courses? Need a proctor for your exams? If so, call the Army Education Center Testing Office 876-9764 for an appointment. They can proctor exams for most colleges. Proctoring services are free and available to the Redstone Arsenal community (military/government ID card holders).

Ride needed

Julie Jordan, a badge checker in building 5303, works 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and does not drive because of her disability. She lives off Airport Road and is willing to pay. No handicap accessible equipment will be required. If interested call 604-8433.

Women's fellowship

The Women's Ministry at Cove United Methodist Church will hold its annual Girl's Night Out on Aug. 24. "This event is fun, food and fellowship to bring women together," a prepared release said. "Our special guest speaker this year is Pam Tebow. Yes, Tim's mom, mother of five, former missionary Pam is going to share with us some of her experiences and tips for raising godly children." Tickets are \$15 each. A limited number of tickets is available for a special meet and greet with Pam prior to the event. Those tickets are \$100 each. If interested call Amanda Medley 457-4703.

CFC 50th year

The Tennessee Valley Combined Federal Campaign is accepting nominations for participation in the 2011 Campaign Associates Program. This year marks the 50th anniversary for CFC. Volunteers are needed to help ensure the overall success of the campaign. "This will be an opportunity for you to set an example of caring and concern, not only for your fellow employee, but for our community as well," a prepared release said. Volunteers must attend a four-day orientation in August and be available for up to 20 hours per week during the campaign period (Sept. 1 through Dec. 16). For more information or if interested in volunteering, call the CFC Office 876-9143. Supervisory concurrence is required.

Hawaiian luau

Celebrate your good health at a Hawaiian Luau on July 12 at 7:15 p.m. at the Huntsville Hospital Wellness Center, 1963 South Memorial Parkway. If you would like to start the night off with a swim aerobics class at 6 p.m., leave your name and phone number at (631) 707-6548 to receive a free pass. For the luau, bring a healthy snack, some punch or soda to share. The \$20 donations will be presented to the Iraq, Afghanistan and Gulf War veterans and events at Tut Fann State Veterans Home, such as an event for Thanksgiving for the 150 veterans at Tut Fann.

Senior volunteers

Madison County Retired & Senior Volunteer program is partnered with various nonprofit organizations in Huntsville and Madison County that utilize volunteers. R.S.V.P. recruits, places and trains individuals who are 55 or older to fill community service needs. For more information about R.S.V.P. or the volunteer opportunities, call R.S.V.P. director Pamela Donald 513-8290 or email pdonald@seniorview.com.

Motorcycle poker run

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association will have a Poker Run, Aug. 20 at Rocket Harley-Davidson in Madison to help raise funds for "Operation Stand Down." Registration is from 8:30-10:30 a.m. with the first bike out at 10:30 and the last bike in at 3 p.m. The route starts at Rocket Harley-Davidson goes to Black Water Hattie's, Chips and Salsa, North Alabama Biker Supply, Big D's Cycle and ends at Rocket Harley-Davidson. There will be live music, door prizes, 50/50 raffle, and food and drinks. Entry fee is \$10 per rider, \$5 extra hand, \$5 passenger and \$3 extra hand. Winnings include \$150 for best hand, \$75 for worst hand. For more information, call Tom Gerrish 313-0728 or 348-5898.



