

Scout reports

e-mail: thescout@hua.army.mil

Luncheon

The U.S. Warrant Officers Association will be having its monthly luncheon at 11:30 a.m. on Friday at LakeSide Activity Centre.

The guest speaker will be Dennis Fesser of First Command. The topic will be financial planning and about getting ready for retirement.

For more information, call Chief Warrant Officer Wilmer Acevedo at 538-6842 or e-mail waceved@msn.com.

Technology Expo

The Fort Huachuca Technology Expo will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday at LakeSide Activity Centre.

All personnel and contractors are invited to attend at no fee.

Leading manufacturers, developers and system integrators will be demonstrating the latest computer hardware, software, and services.

For more information, call Jamie Capalbo toll-free at 888-603-8899, ext. 214 or e-mail capalbo@ncsievents.com.

Prayer Breakfast

The Fort Huachuca National Prayer Breakfast will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. on March 8 at LakeSide Activity Centre.

Tickets are available through unit command sergeants major and first sergeants through Feb. 27.

Retirees or those not connected to a unit, call Jo Moore at 533-4748.

INSIDE



Open range

Ready to retire? Learn about your options.

- Pages 4 and 5



Cavalry charge

B Troop took the history of the cavalry to Tucson

- Page B2



Photo by Sgt. Kristi T. Jaeger

Mission accomplished

Hugs, kisses and tears were waiting at Barnes Field house at the 'final' redeployment ceremony for 11th Signal Brigade Soldiers. Sgt. Tim Murdoch, 86th Signal Battalion, returns home to his wife Melanie and daughter Paige, for good. See related story on Page 3.

Hospitalized vets get Valentine's greetings from USAG Soldiers

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS DONALD SPARKS
NCOIC, USAIC&FH PAO

As many panic-stricken lovers scoured the card aisles and flower shops in search of the perfect last-minute Valentine's Day gift to show they didn't forget the ones they love, a forgotten few American heroes saw the day as just another day.

That is until the noncommissioned officers of Headquarters, Headquar-

ters Company, U.S. Army Garrison reminded them they were loved and appreciated. The NCOs took part in the 29th Annual National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans at the Southern Arizona Veterans Administration Health Care System in Tucson on Feb. 12.

"The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans gives everyone a chance to let those who have given the nation so much know that they are not forgotten," said Jonathan

Gardner, SAVAHCS director.

Gardner expressed his gratitude for having the Soldiers in uniform take part in the event and explained how much it means for the veterans.

"There is a kinship and bond between the vets and today's Soldiers that can't be replaced," Gardner said. "The camaraderie spans generations because they've [vets] given their yesterdays for our today."

The idea to visit the hospital was part of Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development by First Sgt. Oliver Jackson, HHC, USAG first sergeant. During his long range planning for NCOCPD in December, he figured February would be a good time to take his NCOs to the hospital and interact with veterans.

"This just made the event that more special [when I found out

See VETS, Page 3

DA : Flag will be worn on uniforms

BY PFC. JOY PARIANTE
SCOUT STAFF

The ruling has been passed down from the Department of the Army pertaining to the wear of the reverse-side, full-color U.S. flag cloth replica on all utility uniforms to include standard green battle dress uniforms, desert BDUs, maternity BDUs, field jackets, air-

crew BDUs and combat vehicle crewman's uniforms.

The current policy on the wear of the U.S. flag on utility uniforms is expanded to include all Soldiers, regardless of deployment status.

"The nation is at war and will be for the foreseeable future. As the expeditionary Army, our Soldiers' commitment to fight and win our

nation's war, at home and abroad, is best exemplified by permanently wearing the U.S. flag insignia on the utility uniforms," according to the DA.

As per Army Regulation 670-1, all Soldiers will wear the cloth flag replica sewn one-half inch below the right shoulder seam of the utility uniforms. When a shoulder sleeve insignia from former wartime ser-

vice is worn on the right shoulder, the flag will be placed one-eighth inch below it.

Any costs pertaining to the purchase or attachment of the flags on the BDUs and field jackets of enlisted Soldiers will be at government expense. Officers will pay for alterations of their BDUs and field jackets. Alterations for desert BDUs, maternity BDUs, air-

crew BDUs and combat vehicle crewman's uniforms, both officer and enlisted, will be made at government expense.

The new policy is in effect depending on the commander's ability to secure flags and funding and any upcoming deployments or redeployments. Mandatory wear date of the U.S. flag insignia on the uniforms is no later than Oct. 1, 2005.

TeamTalk

Post places 'best'



BY
MAJ. GEN. JAMES
"SPIDER"
AND MARTY
MARKS

Wow! For the second year in a row, Fort Huachuca is listed among the top posts in the Army Times annual "best post" competition. The Army Times assessment of quality of life statistics shows our home here in third place in the "best weather," "best commute," and "lowest crime rate" categories.

Fort Huachuca's placing in this competition doesn't surprise Marty and me, because we know what a great place this is. It does, however, validate our convictions and demonstrates to everyone else the great quality of life we have here.

There's never a lull in the action around here, and we want to make sure you're all aware of some of the activities coming up. We'll be commemorating Black/African-American History Month with a celebration at the LakeSide Activity Centre from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Feb. 26. Entitled "Black Americans Throughout the Centuries," this event will include a dramatic presentation as well as food samplings showcasing African, Caribbean and soul cuisine. Tickets are just \$4 and are going fast, so get them from your Equal Opportunity advisor soon. You can call 533-3696/1717 for more information on this or any of our other special emphasis programs.

The Army Family Action Plan issue sheets are out for our post AFAP conference, set for March 9-10 at the Main Post Chapel. This is

your opportunity to make your voice heard by submitting into AFAP any critical issues of concern you have. In addition to picking up the issue sheets all over post, you can also find them on the Army Community Services Web site: <http://huachuca-www.army.mil/af.ap/index.htm>.

In preparation for that event, we need volunteers to be delegates to the conference, folks to assist as facilitators or recorders, and people who are willing to help with conference registration, hospitality, etc. This is something anyone can help with – delegates are needed from the ranks of active duty military, reservists, retirees, Dept. of Army civilians, family members, and teens.

Our AFAP coordinator, Andrea Sovern, has lots of AFAP delegate training lined up for the next week. She can be reached by phone at 533-3686 or via email at andrea.sovern@us.army.mil. She's doing a super job of organizing the conference but needs your support to make it the most effective tool it's designed to be to help resolve issues that affect our Army family. Make a difference and get involved in this critical event.

AFAP is just one of the many important programs where you can and should get involved. There are all kinds of avenues where each and every Fort Huachuca community member can become involved and voice their concerns and opinions. Our PX/commissary council, the monthly Round Up, the child development center's "Parents Who Care" advisory board, and the monthly school board meetings are just a few examples of groups where you can get involved.

To each of you, thanks for everything you do to make and keep Fort Huachuca truly a "best post."

Chaplain's Corner

Listen better

BY CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) DANIEL MINJARES
FORT HUACHUCA RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES
COORDINATOR

The world of today is filled with the ever-present cell phone. It seems that no matter where you go, or where you drive, you see someone with or talking on one of these amazing, technologically advanced devices.

This would lead to the assumption that with the dramatic increase in the number of cell phones and all the talking taking place on cell phones, that we are communicating more and better than ever.

In fact, a cell phone representative continually asks the question, "Can you hear me now? Good!" And yet, even though you may be able to hear another person, and you may be getting great reception, this doesn't mean that communication is taking place.

As I watch people on cell phones, what I see is a lot of talking but not much listening. It is easy at times to think, that if two people are talking, and there are many words flying around in the conversation, then they are communicating. While words and talking are significant parts of the communication process, there is one more vitally important piece that is easily overlooked.

When a couple comes in for marriage counseling, quite frequently one of the concerns in their marriage is difficulty in communication. As I talk with them about

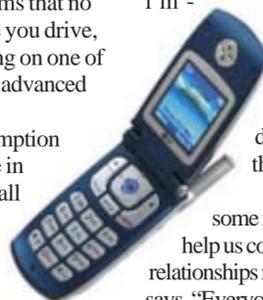
their communication, what winds up being the real issue isn't that they aren't talking, but they are not listening to each other.

The simple, yet difficult art of really listening to someone else can dramatically improve our communication ability. But listening is hard work. It is challenging and difficult at times for us to stop what we are doing and devote ourselves to listening to the other person.

Not surprisingly the Bible has some important guidance that will help us communicate and make our relationships more satisfying. James 1:19 says, "Everyone should be quick to listen and slow to speak." We are unfortunately well practiced at the reverse of this admonition, "We are quick to speak and slow to listen."

By listening carefully and attentively, we show the person they are important to us and that we want to hear what they are saying. When we put aside the paper, stop working on the computer, or kneel down to our child when they talk, we are really saying to them "I love you and you are important to me!"

I would encourage you to begin today to work at becoming better at the fine art of listening. You will be amazed at the difference this will make in your communicating with others and how much better your significant relationships will become.



Editorial

Stickers, lollipops aren't real incentives to vote

BY KIRSTINDILLINGHAM
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As I approached my 18th birthday in November, I grew more and more excited because I had already registered to vote and was just awaiting the opportunity to exercise my new right. I know a lot of people probably thought I was a nerd for being so excited about the simple act of voting, but I was eager to live up

to the responsibility of all those living in a democracy: to choose a leader capable of successfully running the country according to the wishes of the people. With these thoughts in mind, I eagerly awaited Arizona's Democratic primary.

So, on Feb. 3, I decided to do my part and voted for the first time. I had hoped to get one of those "I Voted" stickers out of the experience (which I did), and I also got something else that had never occurred to me in my wildest

dreams—a lollipop. However, of course, my real incentive to vote wasn't the giveaways, but the satisfaction of fulfilling my responsibility as a citizen of the United States.

Although most of my friends are, like myself, politically aware and active, I am always disappointed at the number of 18-year-olds who couldn't name a presidential candidate if their lives depended on it.

I've been told that fewer teenagers come out to vote than any other age group, and I think that most people I know who have registered to vote did so only to get the extra credit points in their U.S. Constitution classes.

Many people believe that even if they do vote, they will never make a difference. However, I believe our individual votes do have an impact, but we must each take just a few minutes to

register and then to fill out a simple ballot so we can help decide the future of our country. I know I'll always vote, every chance I get, regardless of the stickers and the candy.

We teenagers will be ready to take on the responsibility of being a part of the democratic process, but only if we register to vote, learn about the issues and candidates, and then show up at the polls on voting day.

Scout On The Street

Do you think your vote counts?



"I think it counts to a certain extent. But the electoral college has the overall vote."

Spc. Elliot Brown
Company A,
305th Military Intelligence
Battalion



"Every vote counts, like in the last election."

Pvt. Philip Yeiter
Company D,
309th Military Intelligence
Battalion



"Yes. A lot of young people didn't vote in the last election so if they do this time maybe it will make a difference."

Spc. Eric Johnson,
Medical Department
Activity



"Yes I think my vote counts. Everybody's vote counts. I think everybody should vote."

Pfc. Harman Hartman
Company D, 309th MI Bn



"Yes, I think my vote counts. Because you feel that in the slightest margin those absentee ballots count to make a difference."

Capt. Katrina Streeter,
MEDDAC



"Yes. With our government if you don't vote, then how will you be heard? It's the only way for you to be heard in our political system."

Sgt. Dahalia Trevenen,
504th Signal Battalion

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11th Signal Soldiers, colors come home

BY PFC. JOY PARIANTE
SCOUT STAFF

The 11th Signal Brigade Thunderbirds returned home and uncased their colors in front of a crowd of family and friends who were

ecstatic regardless of their arrival shortly after midnight Wednesday morning.

The welcoming ceremony at Barnes Field House greeted Soldiers who have been deployed for between three and 16 months to the Southwest

Asia theater of operations, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qatar and Iraq, said 1st Lt. Bill Knott, Public Affairs Officer for the 11th Signal Bde.

The brigade's subordinate units included the 86th Signal Battalion, the 504th Signal Bn., the 40th Signal Bn. and Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 11th Signal Bde.

The Thunderbirds were deployed to "provide communication support to subordinate warfighter units in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom," said Col. Brian Hurley, commander, 11th Signal Bde.

The unit also learned a lot of lessons during their deployment, including the value of teamwork.

"You've gotta work as a team to get mission accomplished because there's not a lot of reaction time," said Master Sgt. Michael A. Haskins, HHC 11th Signal Bde.

The night also brought the return and uncasing of the brigade colors.

The colors were cased when the brigade's mission was completed, Hurley said.

The colors were uncased when the unit returned home to signify the start of the next mission for the 11th Signal Bde.; returning to normal garrison brigade mission.

After being dismissed from formation, Soldiers rushed into the arms of loved ones who had been waiting patiently all night.

Being back in the desert environment of Arizona was "refreshing" to Spc. Talon Jayne, 86th Signal Bn., who returned home after one year, one month of deployment. He was looking most forward to "seeing this one" he said gesturing to his wife, Katie, and then hugging her.

Most Soldiers, like Haskins, were just eager to get back to their families.

"The greatest thing for a commander is to bring everyone home safely," Hurley said.

However, he added, there are still Thunderbirds serving in Southwest Asia. "It's not a real homecoming until they're all home safely."



Photo by Sgt. Kristi T. Jaeger

Lt. Col. John Dewey, commander 40th Signal Battalion, returns from the Middle East as part of the redeployment of 11th Signal Brigade.

VETS, from Page 1

about the national salute]," Jackson said. "Not only would the NCOs give back to those who served before us, but at the same time be able to take the lessons learned from heroes of the past."

As the NCOs were split into groups, they collected Valentine's Day greeting cards prepared by students of Fort Huachuca's Smith Middle School to deliver to the veterans. Going room-to-room the Soldiers gave cards and candy to both vets in wheelchairs and bed-stricken.

Old battle weary-eyes began to light up on

the vets' faces, and it was evident the NCOs boosted the morale of the vets as they began to tell stories from their time in uniform.

"This brings back a hell of a lot of memories," said 84-year-old World War II veteran J.E. Rhode, who was part of the 366th Fighter Army Group. "It means a lot to me because they took time out of their day to visit us. My advice to them is to do your jobs and keep your mouth shut!"

Korean War veteran Victor J. Brunelli was particularly touched when he saw the captain bars on the beret of Capt. Chester Delf, HHC, USAG commander. Brunelli served as an instructor for Air Force in its infancy - training future officers as a captain.

As he slowly moved his thumb across the shiny, silver bars, Brunelli reminisced of a time when he first joined the Missouri Army National Guard and

his attempts of becoming a pilot.

The experience of visiting the veterans moved many of the NCOs and symbolized the true meaning of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. However for Staff Sgt. James Cummings the visit encouraged him in another way as well.

"At first I was apprehensive about going into the hospital because hospitals have always symbolized sickness and death to me," Cummings said. "But after seeing their reactions to us in uniform, I realized they still have a lot of life and a lot of pride for serving our nation."

"After sitting down and talking to them, I can honestly say they built up my pride in the military and that makes me feel good."

Although the visit was just for a few hours, J.L. Pepe Mendoza, assistant public affairs officer of the

director, SAVAHCS, said the impact lasts much longer.

"Today the veterans were able to reflect on their time in the military, share war stories and meet today's generation of Soldiers," Mendoza said.

"When they see today's Soldiers, they see youth. When they leave here today, the veterans talk days, weeks and months about their visit. It truly lifts their spirits and we're glad the Soldiers took part in this event."



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Donald Sparks, photo illustration by Pfc. Joy Pariente



Service News

Temporary health benefits for Reserves

The Department of Defense announced this week that it will implement the "2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program" for certain eligible Reserve Component sponsors and their family members.

The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act and the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2004 authorized new health benefits, some permanent and some temporary. The 2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program includes three temporary Tricare benefit provisions; some are effective as of Nov. 6, and all expire Dec. 31, 2004. Total expenditures for these new provisions may not exceed the \$400 million limit established by Congress for fiscal 2004. Tricare Management Activity will implement the new provisions in phases starting in the spring.

Padilla allowed access to lawyer

Jose Padilla, an enemy combatant detained at the Charleston Consolidated Naval Brig in Charleston, S.C., will be allowed access to a lawyer subject to appropriate security restrictions according to a Department of Defense spokesman. Arrangements for that access are being coordinated. DoD has determined that such access will not compromise the national security of the United States, and DoD has determined that such access will not interfere with intelligence collection from Padilla, who is a U.S. citizen.

Reserve mobilization

Last week, the Army and Marine Corps each reported a decrease in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization. The Navy and Air Force each reported an increase. The net collective result is 1,207 fewer reservists than the week before.

U.S., North Korea deal on MIA

U.S. and North Korean negotiators agreed Feb. 11 to improve markedly several areas of cooperation in operations to recover the remains of American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War.

During talks in Bangkok, Thailand, both sides agreed to resume repatriating remains recovered during joint recovery operations in North Korea across the demilitarized zone at Panmunjom. This practice has not occurred since 1999.

Budget issues

Acknowledging that the president's budget request for fiscal 2005 represents "an enormous amount of money," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told Congress Feb. 12 it funds investments that ensure the nation's ability to face future threats, including those posed by terrorists.

Rumsfeld told the House Appropriations Committee the \$401.7 billion budget request will cover operations and initiatives needed "because our nation is engaged in a struggle that could well go on for a number of years."

Cope India 04 begins

The first bilateral dissimilar air combat exercise between the U.S. Air Force and the Indian air force in more than 40 years began at Gwalior Air Force Station, India Feb. 16. with approximately 150 airmen from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

Dissimilar air combat training, otherwise known as DACT, is simulated combat flying between two different types of aircraft. Indian air force aircraft participating in the exercise include the Mirage 2000, MiG-21, MiG-27 and SU-30. The airmen from Elmendorf are flying F-15 Eagles.

USS Enterprise begins operations

USS Enterprise entered the waters of the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility Feb. 5, after transiting the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea following almost four months of operations in the Middle East. For the crew, this transition is yet another milestone in what so far has been a remarkable deployment that began in late August 2003.

Enterprise Sailors were on the forefront of modern warfare as the Enterprise Carrier Strike Group united with the USS Peleliu Expeditionary Strike Group in mid-October, creating the Navy's first Expeditionary Strike Force. The strike force juggernaut demonstrated two hallmarks of 21st century war fighting - versatility and flexibility.

Nimitz sailors compete for fitness

Sailors began finding the motivation to "melt" off the pounds. They're currently competing with other ships in the Fleet Inter-Ship Meltdown, a program designed to help Sailors improve their physical fitness.

Nimitz is awarding prizes to Sailors for losing the most weight in 10 weeks. The first-place male and female will receive a \$50 gift certificate to a sporting goods store, the second-place male and female will receive embroidered polar fleece jackets, and the third-place male and female will receive embroidered polo shirts.

Each Sailor must weigh-in every week to track their progress. The weight scale is used to determine each command's total weight lost.



Camo to Soldiers 'suit up' for new career - retirement

BY SGT. KRISTI T. JAEGER
SCOUT STAFF

When it's time to retire, it's time to take off the camouflage and put on the suit and tie. It's time to settle in one area with the family, instead of moving every couple of years to a different duty station. It's time to work in the civilian sector, spend more time with the kids and put the boots in the closet. It's time to take the memories of a military career and hold on tight to them, as it has just come to an end.

The decision to retire can be based on many things, such as meeting the time requirements, exceeding them or simply not getting the promotion that was anticipated.

"It's not a tough decision to retire," said Staff Sgt. Steven T.

Anderson, an instructor with Company B, 305th Military Intelligence Battalion. "Since I missed the cut for sergeant first class, I would rather retire and start a new career at this stage in my life."

For Col. Howard Phelps, G-2 States Army

United Network Enterprise Technology Command, 9th Army Signal Command, the decision was made based on his 26 years in the Army.

"When you've been in this long, you can tell when it's your time," said Phelps. "It took a great deal of thinking and hand wringing."

As with any 'family,' it is likely people will be missed when Soldiers retire. Other aspects of the military lifestyle may be missed as well, to include the most minor details such as physical training and formations.

"I don't believe they [retirees] understand what they will miss about the military until about 60 days after retirement," said Ted Hartman, chief military personnel services. "The comments come back about missing being around a lot of people and friends that were all working to accomplish the same thing. Their big family is

gone."

For Anderson, 20 years on active duty is enough time for him. "I've never been stationed at any post longer than three years," he said. Anderson started his military career as an infantryman and reclassified as a military intelligence systems maintainer/integrator.

Phelps feels if colonels didn't retire, there wouldn't be any room for lieutenant colonels to advance. "I would rather it be my decision to retire than have someone else tell me I have to go," he said. Phelps didn't initially plan to make the military a career. He made history in 1978 when he was the first army officer to be commissioned at the Centre College of Kentucky in more than 100 years.

Both Soldiers will be pursuing second careers in the civilian sector following retirement. Phelps would like to remain associated with information technology and intelligence support, "just changing uniforms," he said. Anderson, who is currently writing his resume towards a management position in IT maintenance or installation fields, feels there are lots of opportunities for a retiring military intelligence systems maintainer/integrator with a top secret clearance and 20 years of experience.

"I've seen a lot of Soldiers I know [from Korea and Bosnia] working for contractors here," Anderson said.

Possibly one of the main upsides to retirement is settling with a family in one area, without expecting to move every few years.

"I plan to retire in this area at least until my kids finish high school in 2010," Anderson said. "Then maybe head toward a state that has greener grass."

Phelps will also be residing in Sierra Vista, following his retirement. Originally from Georgia and Arkansas, he feels the east coast is too congested. He also has a daughter who is attending the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Phelps has been in the army his entire adult life and says that the thing he will miss the most is the people. What he won't miss is the long hours and being away from home.

"The Army is a big organization," he said. "But it does what it does on a day to day basis because of the people in it."

"I think the most difficult adjustment to retirement will be not getting up at 4 a.m. to do physical training," Anderson said jokingly. Without staff duty, field time, ruck marches and ranges, Anderson doesn't know what he will do with himself.

Hartman, on the other hand, said people actually do miss physical training and formations.

"Most of all they miss the camaraderie the Army perpetuates," Hartman said. "The active Army keeps moving. Everything keeps moving and if you are not there, it moves without you."

"It's been a heck of a ride," said Phelps.

Decision to retire tough

Service offers programs to help Soldiers make plans

BY SGT. KRISTI T. JAEGER
SCOUT STAFF

Coming to the end of a military career is not necessarily as simple and sweet as it sounds.

There are many things retirees must take into consideration when preparing for the transition from camouflage to civilian attire.

Upon military retirement, families change locations, (often to areas where they know few people if any outside of family members), change careers, and change lifestyles, according to retirement service, Deputy Chief of Staff, Army G-1 at <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/preretirement.asp>.

Soldiers should start preparing for retirement 18 months prior to their 20th year of active federal service, said Ted Hartman, chief military personnel services

One of the big steps toward retirement is to take advantage of all the programs the military has to offer.

The Army Career and Alumni Program, the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services and Tricare all have

information to offer that will allow the Soldier to make educated decisions at retirement, he said.

Soldiers will have to make survivor benefit decisions, as well as find out exactly how much that retirement check will be.

"Every Soldier's financial situation is different," said Hartman. Some Soldiers have auto payments and some don't. Almost every retiree will have a house payment and utilities.

Those who have children may have school expenses, whether it is children attending high school or college, said Hartman.

The date of initial entry into military service will determine which plan the retiree falls under.

There are three retired pay plans for computing length-of-service retired pay.

One of the hardest aspects of retirement for many Soldiers is to understand the past 20 years of service is not a real retirement, said Hartman. Realistically, most retirees must find a job in order to support their families.

"A 'retiring Soldier' is on the average of 45-48 years old," said Hartman. "He or she will have another 30 years of civilian work ahead of them when they leave their present profession."

"After the 20 year mark, the Soldier is not really retiring, he is making (to some) a drastic career change," said Hartman.

Tricare takes care of retired servicemembers

BY PFC. JOY PARIANTE
SCOUT STAFF

So you're planning on retiring, but worried about who'll take care of your medical and dental affairs once you can't go to sick call anymore? Don't worry; Tricare has various medical and dental programs available for servicemembers' use after retirement.

Tricare is the official government health care program for uniformed servicemembers, retirees, family members and surviving spouses of deceased military.

The uniformed services include the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Public Health Service.

The treatment range for Tricare beneficiaries includes anywhere in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto

Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Canada.

After retirement, eligible individuals include:

- Sponsor retiree, until 65
- Spouse
- Children until 21, unless in school and then until 23
- Unremarried spouses and children of servicemembers who died while on active duty or after retirement

Retirees can choose from three different Tricare benefit packages. Tricare Prime is the standard plan and available at no cost to the retiree. Military Treatment Facilities are the principal source of health care. Tricare Extra has the option to use military treatment or civilian treatment with a co-pay. Tricare Standard is a fee-for-service option.

After 65, retirees are eligible for Tricare for Life. TFL is eligible for all Medicare eligible uniformed services retirees, includ-

ing members of the Reserves, Medicare eligible family members and Medicare eligible widows or widowers.

TFL pays secondary to Medicare for stateside treatment. For overseas treatment, TFL pays Tricare Standard benefits.

There are no enrollment fees, but the Medicare Part B monthly premiums must be paid. For more information on Medicare premiums, visit www.medicare.gov.

Also available for retirees is the Tricare Retiree Dental Program. TDRP is a combined fee-for-service provider plan. There is a deductible that must be reached before payments for service can begin. If participating dental providers are used, low pre-negotiated fees are set. If an out-of-network dentist is used, co-pay may be required depending on what services are rendered.

For more information on Tricare retiree benefits, visit www.tricare.osd.mil.

cashmere



A boot is a boot combat to cowboy

BY SPC. SUSAN REDWINE
SCOUT STAFF

Lots of folks envision retirement as a time to put away the responsibilities of the work world and wake up each morning with a day of leisure ahead of them. Some folks look forward to retiring because they'll be able to get away from it all and retire from the world, so to speak. Some folks, though, take advantage of the time and live a whole other life.

Retired Brig. Gen. Roy "Bud" Strom Jr. falls into the latter category. Since retiring from the Army, after 31 years of service, Strom has lived an active life, transforming himself from Soldier to cowboy.

Strom can usually be found at his ranch outside Sierra Vista wearing cowboy garb instead of BDUs: jeans and a denim jacket, cowboy boots and hat. With a graying mustache, he has the steely look of a man who's used to being in charge. But his Clint Eastwoodesque gaze isn't for intimidation. He's quick to smile and make jokes, and make others feel at ease. Perhaps he wears the look of a man who's concerned about how his animals are doing; someone who has to be ready to take care of the unexpected problems that will inevitably arise as a rancher.

"It's general repair work around the ranch. You prioritize the night before and then you turn the priorities upside down and throw them out the window because something else has happened," he said.

Strom's passion about being a cowboy and the cowboy way of life began when he worked as a 'kid cowboy' in the summers on a ranch in Montana.

"I was captured by the outdoors and work ethic and wanted to pursue it if I ever had a chance," said Strom.

"Being a cowboy means I have a chance to continue the stewardship of care to the land and to animals and I think that's important," he said. "There's a great romance in the figurative sense of taking care of inanimate objects that can't take care of themselves. You're in touch with nature all the time."

One thing Strom does is take his passion for the cowboy way of life and share with others through poetry. Besides writing and publishing his own poetry, Strom has been an integral part of the annual Cochise Cowboy Poetry and Music Gathering in Sierra Vista. His efforts helped the gathering earn the prestigious National Cowboy Cultural Event Award this year.

He also has gone to schools for the past 10 years to expose children to the history of the American West through the art of poetry. Strom estimates that he speaks to 15-17,000 children per year in third through twelfth grades. He has spoken at schools in Arizona, Georgia, Ohio and Colorado and said he feels privileged to work with the kids.

Although Strom is actively involved in getting the message out to those who otherwise might not have a chance to learn about cowboys, most of his time is spent

working at his ranch.

Strom's spread, the Single Star Ranch, is a collection of several small buildings close to the road and acres of rangeland in the rear of the property. Visitors are greeted by the welcoming committee, three happily barking dogs that are always glad when guests come around.

Guests are made welcome at the bunkhouse.

The bunkhouse is the heart of the ranch, the place where friends, family and cowhands spend time eating together enjoying each other's company to the serenading of weaning calves outside.

Always delighted to show folks around the bunkhouse and point out curious facts about the structure as well as the stories behind the many cowboy decorations, Strom just might give an impromptu recital of a poem regarding the many functions of the cowboy hat. He is expressive with his low gravelly voice, speaking methodically and rhythmically, clearly announcing as though the words were music.

A typical day for Strom consists of getting up early to feed the horses, take care of any animals that need special attention, feeding the chickens and then saddling up and riding out to review the fence line. Because his ranch is so close to the U.S. - Mexican border, Strom said his property is often trespassed onto by illegal immigrants who sometimes cut his fences.

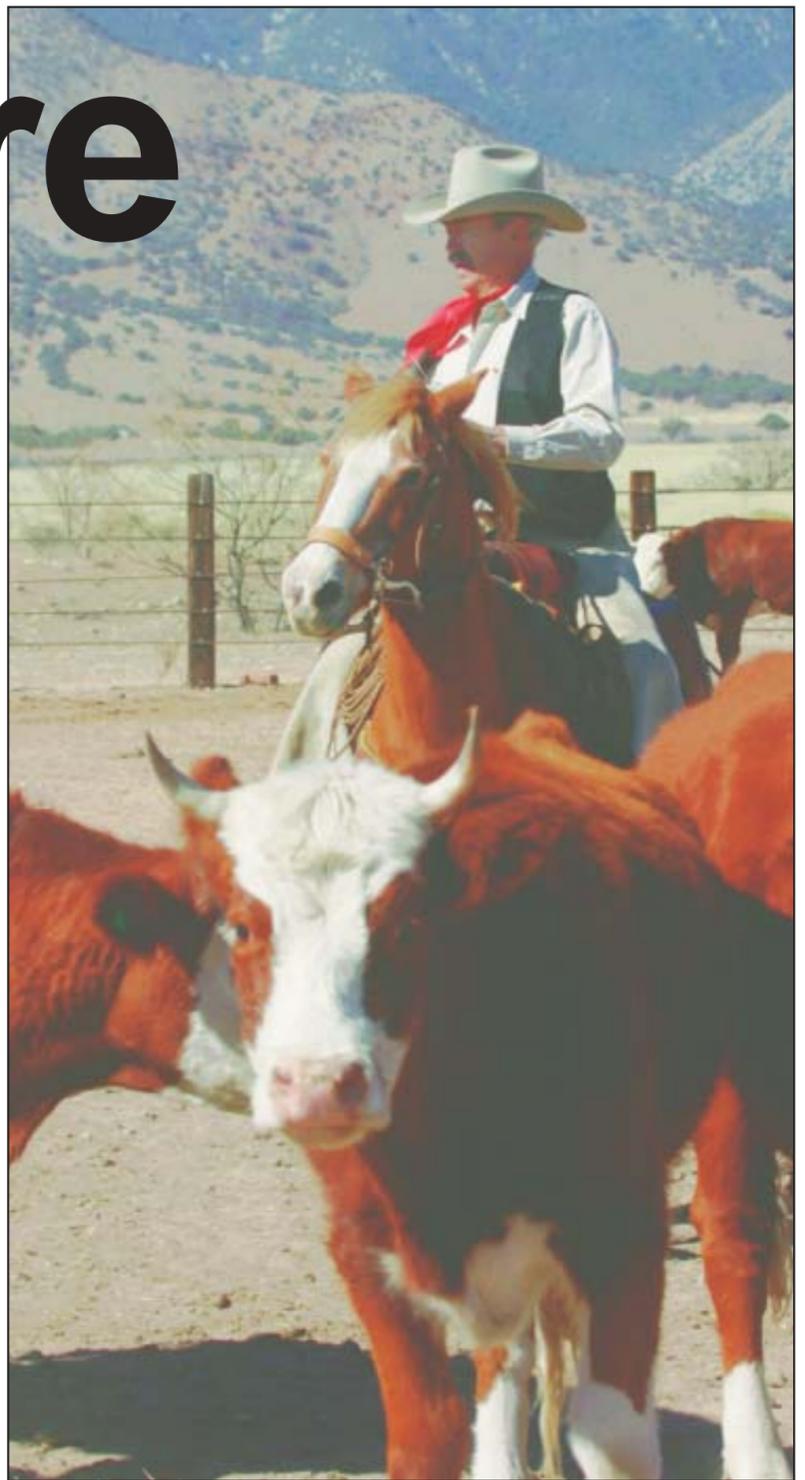
While the rank that he achieved in the military is something he is proud of, Strom said he doesn't hang his hat on it. He prefers not to go into too much detail about his military accomplishments calling them, "a gentle smattering of all good things."

He credits much of his success in the military to the efforts of the very talented men that he worked with.

"I loved it and was challenged and I hope I challenged other people," he said. "I was blessed with young men who worked with me throughout my military career."

A talent for working with others is something that Strom has carried over into his retired life.

"I think I have the same respect for fellow man in this retired life as in the military. You can't do things alone," he said.

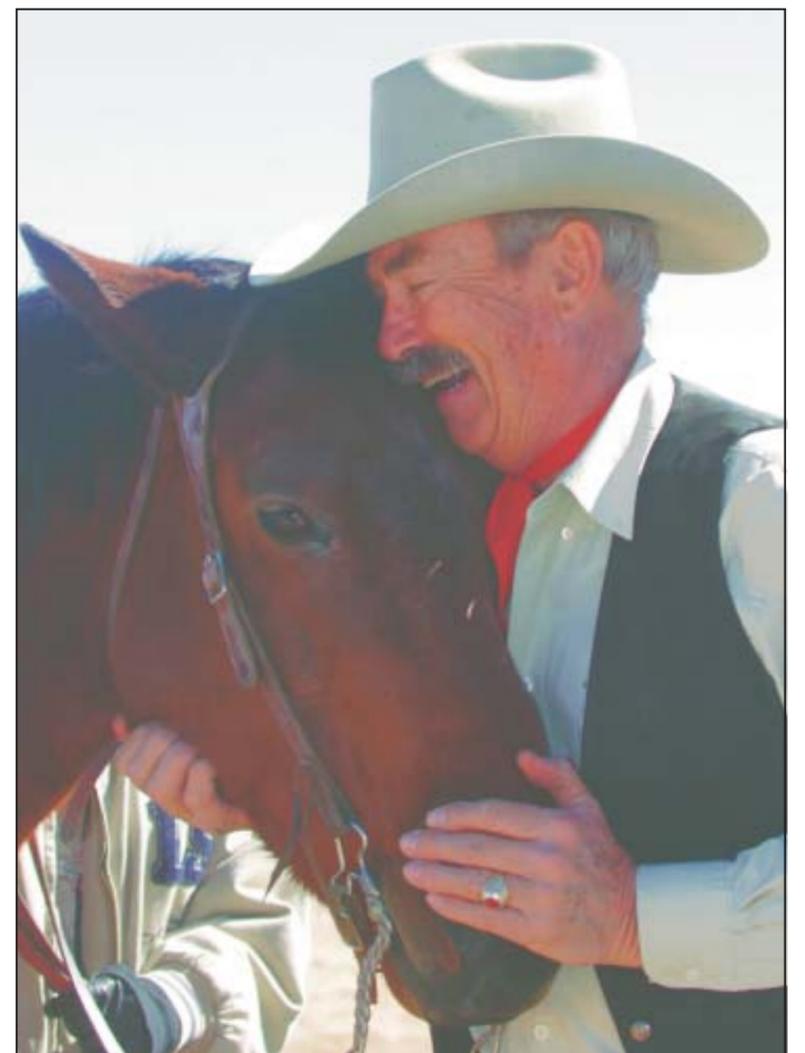


Photos by Elizabeth Harlan

Bud Strom has turned his childhood dreams into a reality and owns a cattle ranch south of Sierra Vista.

Strom has been around the world, having been stationed in Panama, Germany, Japan and all over the United States. When he was stationed at Fort Huachuca in the early '80s as the deputy commandant and then commandant of the Military Intelligence center and school, Strom said he came to Arizona kicking and screaming.

"I was thrust into Arizona, it wasn't where I wanted to be, but shortly thereafter, I loved it," said Strom. "Having been all over the world, this is where we chose to retire."



Following a lengthy career in the Army, Bud Strom began his second life—as a rancher. He's turned in the stars he wore on his collar for the jingle-jangle of spurs on his boots.



As a rancher you can plan your day, according to retired Soldier Bud Strom, but 'your priorities turn upside down' because something else always comes up.

Community Updates

Teen AFAP conference

Army Community Service's Army Family Advocacy Program will hold a conference for teens 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., March 6 at the Fort Huachuca Youth Center.

Teens wishing to participate in the conference should attend training at 6:30 p.m. March 1 and 3 at the Youth Center. For more information or to register, call Andrea Sovern at 533-3686 or ACS at 533-2330.



Army Family Action Plan Conference

Volunteers are needed to assist with the Army Family Action Plan Conference to be held Mar. 9 - 11 at the Main Post Chapel. Please call Andrea Sovern at 533-3686 or the Installation Volunteer Coordinator, Kimberlee Bridges at 533-6885.

National Breast Cancer Study

The Sister Study, a national breast cancer research study, is looking for volunteers. You can learn more by visiting the Web site at www.sisterstudy.org, www.sisterstudy.org

Arizona is one of only four states, including Florida, Missouri and Rhode Island, currently enrolling women and the goal is to get 2000 women enrolled by the end of March for phase one of the study. For more information, call (919)-941-9344 extension 343 or e-mail at willia50@niehs.nih.gov



After-duty hours dental emergency

For true dental emergencies occurring after normal clinic hours, please call the Dental charge of quarters cellular telephone at 227-5563 or DCQ beeper at 533-3500-digital access

code-306.

Family members should seek emergency care from their Tricare Dental Plan personal dentist.

Retirees should seek emergency care from the Tricare Retiree Dental Plan personal dentist.



WAC members

The San Pedro Chapter 95 of the Women's Army Corps Veteran's Association is looking for women who are serving in the National Guard and Army Reserves and women who have served in the Army to join their association.

The chapter meets at 12:15 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month, excluding July and August, in the Mona Bishop Room at the Sierra Vista Public Library.

For more information, call 458-3446.



Photo by Elizabeth Harlan

Open wide

Dr. Ray Bersano, *Runion Dental Clinic*, gave check ups to children at *Johnston Elementary School* Feb. 12, including Lily Vetter, six, in Bill Henery's first-grade class. Sheri Ferguson, dental assistant, spoke to the students about the importance of dental hygiene.

Recurring Meetings

Post schools governing board

Fort Huachuca Accommodation Schools governing board meeting:

At 3:30 p.m., every second Monday of the month, at Smith Middle School library. (If this date corresponds with a holiday, contact the number listed below for information on the alternate meeting date.)

For more information or to get an item on the agenda, call Diane Chinen at 459-8199.

CDC parent advisory board

Child Development Center parent advisory board, "Parents Who Care," meeting:

At 4:30-5:30 p.m. every third Wednesday of the month, at the child development center. Issues involving the CDC or School Age Services are discussed.

For more information, call Heidi Malarchik, CDC director, 533-5209.

Conservation Committee

Meetings are held quarterly (third Wednesday of the second month of the quarter), at 10-11:30 a.m., to discuss local and regional conservation issues.

For more information, call Rob Bridges, environmental office, 533-1863.

Round Up

From 10 to 11:30 a.m., the first Tuesday of every month, La Hacienda (LakeSide while La Hacienda is undergoing renovation), 10-11:30 a.m. Purpose of meeting is to facilitate exchange of information on the installation including, but not limited to, events, services, upcoming special activities, etc.

For more information, call Maj. Ketti

Davison, SGS, 533-1143.

"Feedback" held quarterly

"Feedback," Fort Huachuca's live town hall television program:

Held quarterly in the Public Affairs Office television studio, usually 6-7 p.m. Hosted by the commanding general, directors of various installation directorates/programs answer viewers' telephone or email questions live during the hour-long program.

For more information, call Angela Moncur, PAO command information chief, 533-1985.

MAC luncheon

Military Affairs Committee luncheon (a subcommittee of the Sierra Vista Chamber of Commerce):

The luncheons are held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., the first Wednesday of every month, at the LakeSide Activity Centre. Purpose of the meeting is for the business community to exchange information with the installation on events and issues. Outstanding blood-donating unit of the month and Soldier, NCO, and civilian of the month are recognized.

For more information, call Sierra Vista Chamber of Commerce (for reservations), 458-6940.

PX and Commissary Council

Meetings are held quarterly at 1 p.m. (last Tuesday of the second month of each quarter) at Murr Community Center. Purpose of meeting is to discuss any issues involving the PX and the commissary.

For more information, call Jim Chambers, deputy garrison commander, 533-1178.

Tax Season

IRS urges taxpayers to review EITC eligibility

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

The Internal Revenue Service urges working taxpayers with low incomes to review their eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit to see if they qualify for tax relief.

This year, the IRS and 14,000 volunteer sites are available to help taxpayers figure out their eligibility.

The IRS receives the majority of EITC claims in February, usually after workers receive their Forms W-2.

EITC recipients may also qualify for free tax preparation and e-filing through Free File, which is located on IRS.gov.

"This is an important program, and you should check to see if you qualify," said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. "EITC rules can be complicated so you should carefully review the qualifications. Know, don't guess, if you are qualified. If in doubt, contact the IRS or its volunteer partners for help. If someone prepares your taxes, seek out a reputable professional who understands EITC rules and who will avoid common mistakes."

EITC eligibility rules can be found in Fact Sheet 2004-8, in Publication 596 and through links at 1040 Central on IRS.gov.

For tax preparers, there is a new EITC information kit at <http://www.irs-eitc.info/preparer/> and a new EITC tool kit in Publication 3107E.

For the 2003 tax year, income limits have increased. Taxpayers must earn less than \$33,692 if they have two or more qualifying children, \$29,666 with one qualifying child or \$11,230 if there are no children. Income limits are \$1,000 higher if a couple's filing status is married filing jointly.

The maximum refundable credit for the 2003 tax year is \$4,204 for a family with two or more qualifying children, \$2,547 for a family with one qualifying child and \$382 if there are no qualifying children. Many taxpayers qualify for less than the maximum, depending on their income.

The IRS also reminded military families that many of them may also qualify for EITC because supplemental payments and combat pay are exempt from the income calculations.

The EITC was enacted in 1975 to offset federal taxes paid by low-income wage earners and to serve as a work incentive. Last year, more than 20 million taxpayers collected more than \$36 billion in EITC payments.

The IRS is broadening its outreach to EITC claimants in an effort to maximize participation and minimize errors on tax returns. The IRS is taking several steps, including:

- Working with more than 180 community-based organizations nationwide to reach low-income workers who may be unaware of the EITC availability;
- Helping set up 14,000 volunteer cen-

ters that offer free tax preparation for low-income and elderly individuals. Times and locations of these volunteer centers are publicized locally;

- Coordinating with mayors' offices nationwide to help identify low-wage earners who may qualify for EITC;

- Teaming with a special grassroots cadre in two target cities - Los Angeles and Miami - to reach out to taxpayers who have limited proficiency in English but who may qualify for EITC; and

- Providing additional EITC tools to tax practitioners who must perform due diligence when preparing tax returns.

The IRS also has consolidated all EITC management activities within a single EITC office. The office will coordinate EITC program administration in an effort to improve the accuracy of tax returns and to improve the agency's internal processing procedures.

EITC claimants also are urged to consider electronic filing, especially through Free File which will offer free tax preparation and e-filing to millions of taxpayers.

Free File will be operational in mid-January. E-filing, either through Free File or



through a tax professional, will help reduce math errors that can delay a refund. Taxpayers who e-file and use direct deposit will receive their refund in two weeks or less.

Army News Service

'Hire the Heroes' aims to help military mechanics

BY PFC. ELIAMAR CASTANON
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

To help decrease the shortage of qualified auto repair technicians, a leading automotive industry group is joining forces with the U.S. military to match qualified military veterans with available jobs.

"The Hire the Heroes initiative will give thousands of automobile dealers the opportunity to network with military outplacement personnel and to develop strategic relationships to ease the transition for veterans into satisfying service technician careers," said James Willingham, chairman

of Automotive Retailing Today.

Willingham said the recent pool of veterans includes technologically savvy, motivated workers whose skills may be easily adaptable to auto repair positions and other auto dealership careers.

ART statistics show the auto industry will need 35,000 people annually for new high-paying auto technician jobs and tens of thousands more for sales, finance and other jobs in auto dealerships in this decade alone.

"The qualities demonstrated by military personnel are the same qualities every dealer looks for in its employees," said Denise Patton-Pace, ART public relations.

"This is a good career path for veterans that offers good money, retirement and health benefits," she said.

"Our veterans are known for their accomplishments as warriors, but these Soldiers are also some of the most highly trained technicians in their field," said Chief Warrant Officer Kurt Schultz with the Army Ordnance and Mechanical Maintenance School at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. "The Army uses ASE certifications in our professional development models for mechanics."

The Army awards Soldiers promotion points for ASE or other civilian certifications as well,

Schultz said. Many of the dealers offer to train potential job seekers with the necessary ASE certifications, said Willingham.

Veterans may take ASE certification courses through the Veterans Educational Assistance Program or with their Montgomery GI Bill, Willingham said.

For more information on Hire the Heroes, Soldiers may visit the ART Web site at www.autoretailing.org/military or the NADA Web site at www.nada.org.

(Editor's note: Pfc. Eliamar Castanon is a staff writer for the Bayonet newspaper at Fort Benning, Ga.)