

POST SHORTS

Recycling schedule

The recycling schedule pickup for Wednesday, Dec. 31, is plastic, glass and metal. Put items in blue bags and place them on the curb.



Holiday refuse removal schedule

Tuesday's Dec. 30 removals are moved to Monday, Dec. 29 and Thursday's Jan. 1 removal is moved to Tuesday, Dec. 30. There will be no trash pickup on Dec. 25 or Jan. 1.

The only scheduled pickup for Christmas trees is Monday, Jan. 5.

Last day for charity gift wrapping at PX

To get those last minute gifts wrapped, stop by the PX, building 2401, on Dec. 24. The Edgewood Area Youth Services will wrap from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the Technical Escort Unit will wrap from 3 to 9 p.m.

Christmas holiday gate operations

The Harford Gate, or Route 22, in the Aberdeen Area and the Wise Road Gate, or Edgewood Road in the Edgewood Area, will be closed from 8 p.m., Dec. 24 through Jan. 4, for the Christmas and New Year holiday period. The Harford Gate and Wise Road Gate will reopen 4 a.m., Jan. 5.

WRAMC holiday bus curtailment

The Walter Reed Army Medical Center Bus will not operate through Jan. 2, 2004. Normal bus operations will resume on Jan. 5.

For more information, call Arthur Mellinger at 410-278-2161/4811.

ACS assists families for the holidays

With the holiday season fast approaching, Army Community Service would like to remind the APG community that ACS is the point of contact for military families seeking assistance.

This includes active duty Soldiers, Active Guard and Reservists, retirees, widows and widowers.

ACS also partners with agencies seeking to sponsor families for the holidays.

In the past, ACS has supported over 200 military families during the holidays in partnership with on-post agencies, as well as local businesses.

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Health & Safety

USO sends off APG troops for Exodus leave

Story and photos by Yvonne Johnson
APG News

Entertainers, cheerleaders, politicians and radio talk show hosts greeted the more than 1,000 U.S. Army Ordnance Center and Schools service members who moved through Baltimore-Washington International Airport during the mass Exodus Dec. 19.

The Liberty Belles, a nostalgic 1940s troupe, reminiscent of The Andrews Sisters, and the duo, Beyond the Veil, teen daughters of an American Airlines employee specializing in Christian pop, performed several songs. The Ravens cheerleaders and Hooters Airlines hostesses posed for photos, and disc jockeys from Baltimore radio station WMZQ 98.7 serenaded the troops with music.

In addition, U.S. Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger stopped by to offer words of encouragement, and volunteers from local veterans' organizations passed out cookies and bags full of sundries.

American Airlines employees also ran Operation Care Package, in conjunction with the United Services Organization initiative by the same name that provides care packages to American service members during the holiday season.

The OC&S coordinates the mass movement known as Exodus annually with assistance from the USO International Gateway Lounge, located in the airport's lower level.

With more than 460 Soldiers from the 16th Ordnance Battalion, more than 450 from the 143rd

See EXODUS, page 7



From left, the Liberty Belles' Victoria Reed, Linda Sue Moshier and Jennifer Johns, perform a 1940s tune for deploying troops during Exodus at Baltimore-Washington International Airport Dec. 19.

Budget pluses up pay, creates new civilian system

Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

The fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act pluses up military pay accounts and creates a whole new civilian personnel system.

The act, passed by Congress Nov. 7, authorizes DoD to spend \$401.3 billion. The fiscal 2004 Defense Appropriations Act, which actually provides the money, became law Sept. 30. President Bush signed the authorization bill into law Nov. 24.

All service members receive at least a 3.7 percent pay raise. Certain mid-level noncommissioned officers, petty officers and officers will receive targeted pay raises of up to 6.25 percent. The average pay raise is 4.15 percent.

The bill also directs the Executive Branch that the annual military pay increases after fiscal 2006 will be equal to the increase in the Employment Cost Index.

The bill continues the "buy-down" of out-of-pocket expenses by increasing the Basic Allowance for Housing. Currently service members living "on the economy" pay 7.5 percent of the housing costs out-of-pocket. That percentage will drop to 3.5 in fiscal 2004, and be eliminated in fiscal 2005.

The bill also continues hostile-fire or imminent-danger pay at the current level of \$225 per month through Dec. 31, 2004. It continues separation pay at the current level of \$250 per month for the same period.

The bill authorizes an increase in the Army's end-strength. The administration did not request this plus-up. Congress authorized an increase of 2,400 in the active duty Army and an increase of 1,779 for full-time Army reserve component soldiers on active duty.

End-strengths for the services are Army, 482,400; Navy, 373,800; Marine Corps, 175,000; and Air Force, 359,300. Selected reserve end-strengths are Army National Guard, 350,000; Army Reserve, 205,000; Naval Reserve, 85,900; Marine Corps Reserve, 39,600; Air National Guard, 107,030; and Air Force Reserve, 75,800.

Overall end-strength for the military is 1,390,500 on the active side and 863,330 on the reserve.

In addition, Congress increased the National Guard by 264 full-time personnel to man 12 more weapons of mass destruction-civil support teams.

The bill gives reservists and their families more access to TRICARE —

the military's health-care program.

The bill authorizes a phased-in concurrent receipt program for military retirees. The current law requires that retired pay be reduced by the amount of any VA disability payment. Last year, the fiscal 2003 authorization act instituted a program allowing retirees who were awarded the Purple Heart and have disabilities rated at 60 percent or higher to keep both retirement pay and disability compensation.

Effective Jan. 1, 2004, all 20-year retirees with a Purple Heart or a combat-related disability will be eligible for concurrent receipt. The bill authorizes a phased-in full concurrent receipt program over the next 10 years for retirees who are most severely disabled (50 percent or more).

Congress gave the administration most of what it asked for in the new National Security Personnel System. The system, a centerpiece to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's transformation strategy, is designed to increase flexibility and allow supervisors the ability to manage more effectively.

The system builds on more than 25 years of experiments in pay-banding and classification changes. Officials said the new system will make it easier

for the department to hire new highly qualified workers, to change the work force to suit the needs of the future, to reward good workers and to encourage new ways of thinking.

The system still comes under equal employment opportunity protections, and all current laws banning political activities and the like, continue. The new system will make negotiations with unions easier, allowing DoD to negotiate with national bodies rather than local unions.

Other important parts of the act deal with environmental regulations. DoD asked for relief from some aspects of the Marine Mammal Protections Act and the Endangered Species Act. The bill allows DoD greater latitude and will give Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines the ability to participate in realistic training.

Overall funding levels are \$74.2 billion for procurement, \$114.4 billion for operations and maintenance and \$63.4 billion for research, development, testing and evaluation.

On the equipment side, the bill authorizes \$1.7 billion in research and development funding for the Army's Future Combat Systems program.

Cheers, tears of joy greet returning Army Reserve, National Guard units arriving at APG

Marguerite Towson
APG News

'Twas the week before Christmas and after months in Iraq, the Soldiers of the 115th and 324th battalions were due to come back.

It wasn't Santa Clause on his sleigh delivering presents, but battalions of Soldiers on coach buses delivered safely home to their loved ones.

324th comes home

Members of the 324th Military Police Battalion arrived Wednesday evening, Dec. 17, at the Aberdeen Area Recreation Center. Another group from the same company arrived on Thursday afternoon.

The snack bar of the Recreation Center was decorated and filled with welcome home signs, balloons and anxious family members.



Photo by RALPH BROTH

Staff Sgt. Erik Miller plays with son, Kaleb, 2, following months of separation from his family.

"I have to give Col. [Mardi U.] Mark, Butch Grzanka, [APG operations officer], Roy Ballinger [director of Community and Family Activities] and Lt. Vincent Joseph Schaefer, operations officer, credit for all this, they were a big help," said Lisa Cantwell, Family Support Group Leader, and wife of Lt. Col. Thomas V. Cantwell, battalion commander.

Ballinger also added his thanks to Master Sgt. Jonnie C. Wilcox for his efforts in coordinating with the unit and post organizations.

Lisa Cantwell said she tried to spread the news of the homecoming to everyone. "We just got the word out to the families at 8 a.m. when Schaefer called me," Lisa said. "We notified all the families by e-mail and our Web site and we got all of them that we could. They weren't going to be here until April originally."

The U.S. Army Reserve group was sent to APG in February and deployed to Iraq at the beginning of May.

Lisa said that the 324th MP Battalion's assignment was to guard a refugee camp in Baghdad. The battalion also was stationed at Camp War Horse near Baqubah, about 40 miles northeast of Baghdad early on, and also guarded a refugee site up north known as Camp Ashraf.

See HOMECOMING, page 7

Watch card

Do observe and report:

- Unusual or suspicious activity or suspected surveillance.
- Unusual questions or requests for information relating to capabilities, limitations, or operational information.
- Unusual vehicles operating in or around the installation.
- Unusual phone calls, messages, or e-mails.
- Unusual contacts, on or off post.
- Unusual aerial activity near or around installation.
- Any possible compromise of sensitive information.

Do not:

- Discuss any aspect of military operations or planning.
 - Discuss military capabilities or limitations.
 - Discuss force protection measures, capabilities, or posture.
 - Disclose any information related to unit deployments.
- Report any suspicious activity immediately to DOD Police:**
Aberdeen Area 410-306-2222
Edgewood Area 410-436-2222
Off post in Maryland, call 1-800-492-TIPS (8477).
Your call may save lives.

CODE ORANGE

General Physics plays Santa at APG

APG News

Representatives of General Physics Corporation played Santa – delivering toys, clothing and a holiday meal for 11 families in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Ordnance Battalion Dec. 18.

What started out as a grassroots effort at GPC by retired sergeant first class Dave Milton, turned into a snowballing e-mail throughout the company that brought forth many donations.

In an effort to demonstrate their appreciation, GPC employees donated funds and solicited area businesses for additional contributions to provide a memorable Christmas experience for 11 families representing 29 children.

“We shopped not only for toys and clothing, but also for a holiday meal,” Milton said.

Doug Sharp, president of GPC, said his company has been supporting Aberdeen Proving Ground through contracts with the Directorate of Safety, Health, and Environment and the Chemical Material Agency’s Chemical Agent Disposal Program. General Physics operates the U.S. Army’s Chemical Demilitarization Training Facility in the Edgewood Area.

“We wish to express our appreciation for the men and women in our military for their dedication and service,” Sharp said. “General Physics is grateful for and proud of the opportunities we have to support Aberdeen Proving Ground’s mission.”

Several representatives from GPC and ser-

vice members of HHC, 16th Ordnance Battalion, piled toys, clothing, sodas, turkeys and other food in the unit’s orderly room.

Capt. Jeffrey Long, commander, spoke of the bond developed between GPC and APG.

“As we [Active Army] find ourselves more and more involved with civilian counterparts in garrison and combat operations, it is only natural that we build bonds of friendship and trust as one entity focused on one common goal – the defense of our nation,” Long said.

“The act of generosity and kindness from the employees of General Physics Corporation solidifies this notion of partnership and teamwork that will continue to grow as our Army moves further into the 21st century.”

Sometime later in the day, the families were called in to receive their gifts.

“The Soldiers receiving the gifts from the HHC, 16th Ordnance Battalion are very grateful, and wish a warm thanks to our generous civilian counterparts at General Physics Corporation,” Long said.

Other organizations contributing to the joy of Christmas for the 16th Ordnance Battalion families included: AAFES Burger King, Frito-Lay, Geiger Pump & Equipment Company, Heavenly Ham, Kraft Foods, Mars, McDonald’s, Pepsi Cola of Havre-De-Grace, APG Post Commissary and the Exchange, S&J Design Connections, S&K Sales, Super Fresh and Weis Market.



From left, Sgt. 1st Class Harvey Thomas, HHC 16th Ordnance Battalion; Doug Sharp, president, General Physics Corporation; 1st Sgt. Neil Washington, HHC, 16th Ordnance Battalion; Dave Milton, GPE; and Capt. Jeffrey Long, commander, HHC, 16th Ordnance, discuss the distribution of toys donated by GPC employees and others for 11 enlisted families of the battalion.



Capt. Jeffrey Long, commander, and 1st Sgt. Neil Washington, HHC, 16th Ordnance Battalion, carry in toys and food donated by General Physicals Corporation.



photos by DEBI HORNE

This is only one of 11 piles of toys and food designated for a large family with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Ordnance Battalion.

RDECOM holds 17th Annual Food and Toy Drive

Story by Eva Mims

Special contributor

With the goal of supporting more than 75 families in the Edgewood community, the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command, sponsored its 17th Annual Food and Toy Drive October to December.

All donated items were presented to representatives of Neighbors Involved in the Community of Edgewood, N.I.C.E., during a reception at the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center’s Berger Laboratory, Dec. 16.

Barbara Knapp, chairman of the donation committee, said that donation sites were set-up in 25 buildings around the Edgewood Area.

“At regular intervals the donations were transported to the Berger Laboratory where they were sorted and readied for distribution,” Knapp said, adding that some toys required special attention – batteries, repairs, cleaning, or mending.

“Our goal is to support over 75 families with non-perishable food and new or clean, and gently-used toys.”

Maj. Gen. John C. Doesburg, commander of RDECOM and Aberdeen Proving Ground, and Jim Zarzycki, ECBC technical director, led the ceremony in presenting the donated items to NICE.

“We, as an organization must measure ourselves not just by our technical accomplishments, but also by our spirit,” Zarzycki

said. “The Food and Toy Drive says a lot about how our organization lives life. It demonstrates the passion in the organization for what we do.”

He said that when pastor Cheryl Hill of NICE complimented him on his leadership, he felt undeserving.

“There is nothing I needed to do to inspire you,” he told the assembled employees.

“It was hard to believe that we could have surpassed last year’s accomplishment in quantity, quality and enthusiasm, but we did because of your efforts. Thank you so much for a great job. My best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.”

The event included caroling, a visit from Santa, and musical entertainment from the RDECOM Christmas Ensemble. In addition, ECBC employees donated holiday refreshments that included cookies, cakes and beverages.

NICE representatives in attendance included pastor Cheryl Hill, president, and members Stanley Croskey, Brandice Hill, Ericka Hill, Melondie Scott, Horace Tittle, Kim Young, and pastors Shawn Bell and Patricia Pringle.

History of RDECOM Food and Toy Drive

The annual Food and Toy Drive began in 1987 as a toy drive in the Physical Protection Directorate, of which ECBC now has the lead, and was led by Dianne Herron to bring Christmas joy to needy children in Harford County.

Three hundred sixty-eight toy baskets were given out that year. Employees made the sleigh and train that now decorates the building E-3549 cafeteria.

In 2002, Dianne Herron passed away. A memorial plaque in her honor hangs in the cafeteria of the building.

Donations of non-perishable food were added to the drive in 1990. In the past, donations were given to organizations like the Salvation Army of Harford County, Army Community Service, the John Archer School and the Edgewood Sharing Table.

The drive has supported NICE since 1993. NICE delivers the donations to families who submit a request through Harford County Social Services.

Last year’s donations provided food and even toys to 75 families. This year the drive is projected to help more families.

The drive is a true neighbor-to-neighbor effort and many RDECOM employees are accustomed to donating to the drive and have their donations ready well before December.

Many of the committee members have been serving on the committee repeatedly, year after year.

The committee consists of 15 people from across the command that begin planning in October. They include Georgia Braun, Patricia Belcher, Melanie Coen, Emily Fowler, Barbara Frank, Kristina Gonsler, Deborah Huffman, Carolyn McVey, Eva Mims, Virginia Pippen, Mary Ann Ricketts, Zada Stallings and Rebecca Stump.

APG News

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Deadline for copy is Thursday at noon for the following Thursday’s paper.

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Rudolph hands out holiday treats to Susan K. Luckan, Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, and retired Col. Edward W. Ewing at the RDECOM 17th Annual Food and Toy Drive reception Dec. 16.



A sea of donated toys await delivery to representatives of Neighbors Involved in the Community of Edgewood for distribution to needy children in Harford County.

Army Community Service provides help

Spc. Michelle R. Burrows
Army News Service



Legend has it the symbols of the cross, gyroscope and heart represent the idea of giving kindhearted help and stability.

In more recent times, these symbols have combined with the colors of the Army's green uniform, gold buttons and insignia to become one emblem. All are contained within a full circle to represent the whole, or the Army community.

As most communities tend to take care of one another, so it is with the Army community. And heading up that concept of caring is the ACS theme: "Self-Help, Service and Stability."

"It can start with a call from the first sergeant or a commander," explained George Toth, director of the U.S. Military Academy's ACS. "Their concern may be on a particular topic like finances, but we at ACS look at other aspects of a Soldier's situation that may need some attention."

"If a Soldier is having problems keeping current with bills, he is referred to our financial counselor. But that may not be the problem in itself. We look at the circumstances leading up to the problem, for instance, is this a PCS from a duty location where the cost of living was less? Are there stresses of a new job for the Soldier and equal stresses for a spouse trying to find employment in a new area to make up for the increased cost of living? We have a job assistance referral program to help in that area."

Since all things are not always exactly as they appear, Toth said, coming to the ACS office for help or guidance should be one of the first steps for Soldiers.

"No one has to know of your visit if you are not command referred. We offer our assistance to Soldiers so they can be self-reliant and make the best decisions for their family. Don't wait

until you are in trouble to come see us," advised Toth.

ACS provides sound guidance and literature on a wide range of topics including money management, parenting, marriage and handling stress in the workplace, said Toth.

But sometimes no matter how proactive, the unexpected does arrive. Toth said ACS has the answers for these situations, too.

"For financial emergencies, Soldiers will be helped through the Army Emergency Relief Fund," said Toth. "The Soldier can expect to be served in an expedient manner. Although grants are available, we tend to lean towards giving the Soldier a loan to promote 'Self-Help.'"

Access to AER is sometimes through Red Cross notification. Assistance is provided to prevent deprivation of shelter, food or transportation, said Toth. All loans are granted interest-free.

So what can Soldiers do for an emergency that can't be taken care of by AER? Fortunately, Toth said, the Army thought about that too.

"The first question I ask Soldiers to ask themselves is, 'Do I really need it or is it that I want it?'" said Mary Ellen Olivia, USMA's consumer affairs counselor/financial assistance program manager.

"Yes, you may need transportation, but do you need the brand new one? Most problems Soldiers run into are the fancy cars, cable (getting all the premium channels) and long distance bills," said Olivia. "I can help renegotiate the bills with creditors. But it is up to the individuals to stick to the budget that we plan out."

For more information about other programs and activities provided by APG's Army Community Service, call 410-278-7474 or 410-278-7572

(Editor's note: Burrows is with the USMA Public Affairs Office.)

Educating students on flag history

Alison Clark
Special contributor

In preparation for Veteran's Day and as part of the ongoing "Patriot Program," Roye-Williams Elementary School students were treated to a presentation by vexillologists, Gerry and Virginia McCavera from "Flags Unfurled" of Philadelphia.

On Nov. 6, 100 students unfurled the nation's flag and held it high while singing patriotic songs.

A vexillologist is a person who studies flags. The McCavera's shared their extensive knowledge about the history, evolution and proper treatment of the American flag.

"Did you know a dry cleaner is not supposed to charge to clean an American flag?" asked McCavera. This is a service that all

cleaners provide to show their appreciation for the flag."

McCavera reminded the students not to fly an American flag in a storm, and for boys to take off their hats and place them over their hearts during the national anthem and as the U.S. flag passes in a parade.

During the PTA sponsored assembly, McCavera showed flags of different nations, including the U.S. flag, and described their history. Some children were allowed to hold the different flags. Students were asked to name the country a flag was from and asked how the U.S. old flags were different from the current flag.

At the close of the assembly, the students helped McCavera unfurl a 25-foot by 15-foot flag. Once unfurled, the students sang "You're A Grand Old Flag" and "God Bless America."



Photo courtesy of ROYE WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Jillian Lobner, left, and Derrick Daniels, right, 4th grade students at Roye-Williams Elementary School, hold flags as Gerry McCavera, center, a vexillologist from "Flags Unfurled" of Philadelphia, discusses the origin of the U.S. flag Nov. 6.

Religious service Christmas schedule		
Catholic services	Christmas, Dec. 25	Protestant services
Wednesday, Dec. 24	10 a.m. - mass, AA	Wednesday, Dec. 24
5 p.m. - Children's pageant mass, EA	11 a.m. - mass, EA	6:30 p.m. - Christmas Eve candlelight service, AA
Wednesday, Dec. 24	Wednesday, Dec. 31	Gospel services
5 p.m. - New Year's Eve mass, AA	5 p.m. - New Year's Eve mass, AA	Sunday, Dec. 21
11 p.m. - Music cantata, AA - followed by midnight mass	New Years Day, Jan. 1	5 p.m. - Youth Christmas Program, AA
	11 a.m. - mass, EA	

Commentary — The miracle of Christmas



Father
(Maj.)
Joseph L. Di Gregorio
USAGAPG

Madison Avenue tycoons dreamed up."

His wife was disappointed but knew it was useless trying to convince him. At 11:30 p.m., she and the children left for church.

He picked up his paper and sat down, thinking about what he had said. Sure, Christmas was for children. Toys, food, spending money, that's all it was about. Any smart person could see that Christmas was only a moneymaking scheme that big business dreamed up.

A baby born in a manger, the Son of God? Why would God let his Son be born in a manger on a cold wintry night and in a stable no less? No, Christmas was for children.

As he sat reading his paper, it got very quiet. All of a sudden he heard something hit the window. What was that he thought? He got up to see what had happened. As he looked out the window he could see that it was snowing terribly. There were at least two or three inches on the ground.

So that's what it was, he thought to himself.

He went back to his chair and continued to read. Again he heard a knock at the window, once, twice, three times.

He went to look again and was startled to see a number of small birds on the ground below the window. He thought to himself, apparently the snow blinded them and seeing the light of the window they flew into it by mistake and now they were on the ground fluttering.

Again he thought, they're going to die if I don't do something. So he opened the door thinking that the light would revive them but the birds seemed to become frightened.

Again he thought, if I open the garage door maybe I can shoo them into it and they will get warm and fly off. He cer-

tainly didn't want to harm them.

So he opened the garage and began to shoo the helpless birds toward it. But the more he tried, the more frightened they became. By now the snow was at least six inches deep and some of it was going down his neck and some was getting into his shoes and he was beginning to feel awfully cold.

And as if that wasn't enough the birds were becoming more frightened than ever.

He thought to himself, if they only knew that I was trying to help them that I am not going to harm them. But the more he tried the more excited they became and the more they fluttered on the ground. Surely they're going to die, he thought.

And then in desperation he said to himself, if I could only become like one of these birds and show them that I want to help them and not hurt them; he paused for, what seemed like an eternity. He could hardly believe what he had just said; if I could become like one of them and show them.

And now with the snow in his shoes, down the back of his neck and shivering, he knelt on the ground. Everything made sense. This was the miracle of Christmas. God became man to show mankind how to live, how to love and how to share the gifts of creation with every man, woman and child.

And as he knelt there in the freezing snow he whispered, "Thank you Lord for this, the greatest gift the human race could ever receive, the gift of yourself, the gift of life and the gift of love."

You see Christmas is not so much about giving or buying but it is about receiving the greatest gift of all—the gift of God's son and the gift of peace.

God bless you and Merry Christmas.

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POST SHORTS

The families appreciated the fact that the APG community was there to assist them in their time of need. The names of military families in need of holiday assistance must be referred through the unit's commander.

APG organizations may sponsor families with monetary donations, food baskets, toys, and gifts. For more information, call Arcelio Alleyne, 410-278-2450.

Theater holiday schedule

The Post Theater will be closed through Jan. 9.

Outreach Office holiday schedule

The U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at 1011B Woodbridge Center Way, Edgewood, will be closed Dec. 24 to Dec. 26, and Jan. 1. On Dec. 31, it will close at 1 p.m.

Regular operating hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday. For more information, call 410-676-6800.

Flu shots at KUSAHC

The annual Influenza Immunization Program is in progress at Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic.

Flu shots are being offered to all TRICARE beneficiaries in the Immunization Clinic at Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic on a walk-in basis.

Contact the Immunization Clinic at 410-278-1746 for clinic hours during the upcoming holiday schedule.

At this time, flu shots are not being administered to DoD civilian employees. Civilian employees are encouraged to obtain a flu shot from their primary care provider or another civilian source.

Lose weight for the holidays

Lunchtime Weight Watchers meetings are continuing on post with the newest program from Weight Watchers' - FlexPoints. FlexPoints makes losing weight in the real world easier. Get 11 weeks for the price of 10.

Lunchtime Weight Watchers meetings are open to all APG civilian personnel, retirees, military personnel and family members.

For more information, call 410-278-1151.

Requesting the band

The 389th Army Band (AMC's Own) is unavailable for commitments through Dec. 31. Any questions regarding scheduling the band should be referred to Sgt 1st Class Marvin Hunter, 410-278-4380.

APG commemorates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Aberdeen Proving Ground will commemorate the Rev. Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr., 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., Jan. 14, at the Edgewood Area Starke Recreation Center, building E-4140. Guest speaker will be the Rev. Walter Henry, Walter Henry, a DoD employee and local pastor in Elkton, Md.

For more information, call Linda Patrick at 410-436-1023, Capt. Justin Curry at 410-436-7406, Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Serino at 410-278-1534, or Master Sgt. Arbel Connor at 410-278-2529.

Nominations for William H. Kushnick, John W. Macy Jr. Awards

Nominations for the William H. Kushnick Award and the John W. Macy Jr. Award for CY 2003 are due to the Office of the Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel Policy, Policy and Program Development Division, by close of business Jan. 30.

These awards recognize outstanding achievements of Department of the Army civilians. All civilian employees, appropriated fund and non-appropriated fund, U.S. citizens, and local nationals engaged in civilian personnel administration in the Department of the Army (DA) are eligible for nomination for the William H. Kushnick Award. Any DA supervisor, military or civilian (Colonel/GS-15 or below), U.S. citizen or local national, appropriated or non-appropriated fund, is eligible for nomination for the John W. Macy Jr. Award.

Requirements for the nomination may be found at <http://cpol.army.mil>.

For more information, call Dolores Miranda at DSN 221-6641 or 703-325-6641, or e-mail Dolores.Miranda@asamra.hoffman.army.mil.

For more information on the William H. Kushnick Award, see <http://www.cpol.army.mil/permis/5493.html>. For more information on the John W. Macy Jr. Award, see <http://cpol.army.mil/permis/5494.html>.

Possible delays at gate

APG Garrison has begun constructing shelters at APG's entrance gates for protection from winter weather during vehicle inspections.

The construction may cause delays upon entering and exiting the installation.

For traffic issues, call Officer Joe Davis, acting traffic division supervisor, 410-278-5451.

For construction questions, call Greg Bryant, contracting officer representative, 410-306-1178.

EA Shoppette begins new hours

The Edgewood Area

APG News Web site takes a holiday

The APG News Web site Dec. 11 through 26 issues will be updated on Dec. 29.

The site is located at www.apgnews.apg.army.mil. For more information, call the editor at 410-278-1150.

Shoppette, building E-4010, will be open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Civilians are authorized to purchase food items.

The shoppette carries frozen food, quarter pounders with cheese, chicken sandwiches, rib sandwiches, Krispy Kreme donuts, new items and special request items.

FEMA Helpline hours change

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency announced that the hours of operation for the toll-free Helpline serving Marylanders affected by Hurricane Isabel have changed to 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Individuals who have applied for disaster assistance from FEMA and have questions about their application may call the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), or TTY 1-800-462-7585. Helpline operators are available to assist callers with questions on the status of their disaster assistance application, change of applicant's address or other application information, how insurance settlements affect disaster assistance applications, or other questions about assistance.

NAF employees receive credit for military service

Regular Nonappropriated Fund employees participating in the NAF Retirement Program may be eligible to purchase certain prior military service to be credited for NAF retirement benefit computations.

Employees having previous creditable military service, that has not been used under any other employer's retirement system, may wish to purchase their military service (not to exceed five years) to be credited for NAF retirement benefit computation purposes.

The entire deposit must be paid to the USANAF Employment Retirement Plan before Separation for Retirement or the post military service will not be credited.

For employees participating in the Plan on Jan. 1, 1998, interest is first added to the unpaid balance of the deposit on Jan. 1, 2001.

For further information or an appointment, employees are encouraged to call NAF Personnel, Julie Bates, 410-278-8994, or Jean Futty, 410-278-8993.

ARL hearing study

The U.S. Army Research Laboratory is conducting a study on hearing.

Participants need to be 18 to 30 years old with normal hearing.

The time commitment is 5 hours, and each participant will be paid \$10 per hour. Employees of ARL and their relatives are not eligible. Interested volunteers should call Justin MacDonald, 410-278-5925, or e-mail him at jmacdonald@arl.army.mil; or Martha Dennison, 410-278-5918, or e-mail her at mjdennis@arl.army.mil.

Toastmasters meet in Edgewood Area

The Gunpowder Toastmasters Club 2562 meets on the first and third Monday of every month at 11:40 a.m. at The Gunpowder Club.

The lunchtime club offers an opportunity for people to improve communication, leadership and listening skills and to overcome fear of public speaking. For more information, call 410-941-1120 or 410-734-6573.

Employee LES changes

Effective with the pay period ending Jan. 24, Social Security numbers will be "masked" and only the last four digits will show on civilian employees' printed Leave and Earning Statements.

This change should help protect employees against identity theft. Only the printed LES will reflect the change and the full nine-digit SSN numbers will be visible on the LES electronically on myPay.

CWF hosts trips

The Civilian Welfare Fund will sponsor a trip to Broadway, in New York City to see "The Lion King" on April 17. Cost of the trip is \$135 per person and includes charter bus transportation and theater ticket. The bus will depart from the Aberdeen Area 6 a.m. The show begins 2 p.m., leaving time for shopping, touring and lunch prior to the show. They also will sponsor a trip to Scotland, May 11 through 19.

Trip highlights include a ferry to the Isle of Skye, Edinburgh Castle, Loch Ness, sightseeing with local guides to a malt whiskey distillery, the Duke of Athol's Blair Castle, the Museum of the Isles on the Isle of Skye, Inverewe Gardens, and more.

Cost per person is \$2,250 for single occupancy, \$1,999 each for double-occupancy, and \$1,960.00 each for triple-occupancy.

Price includes airfare, hotel accommodations, tour guides, motor coach transportation in Scotland, seven Scottish breakfasts, five three-course dinners, taxes, tours, and tips for baggage handlers. A \$200 deposit per person is due upon reservation.

For more information or to make reservations, call Angela Keithley or Jacqueline McKeever at 410-278-4603/4771.

After Hours Clinic

The After Hours Clinic at Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic is closed on Sundays and holidays. Patients needing advice on health care can call the Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-308-3518. Anyone with an emergency problem should call '911' or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Database of scholarships

All personnel in the military community, including dependents, are encouraged to search MilitaryReport.com's Education Center scholarship database, which has a listing of \$300 million in scholarship funds.

In addition to the scholarship

search available, the educational services provide comprehensive and updated information on educational benefits, such as the G.I. Bill, Veterans Educational Assistance Program and Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program.

To access these education services, visit Web site <http://www.military.com/Careers/Education/1,13289,,00.html?ESRC=mr.nl>.

New Internet address for PMCD

Public information about the Army's chemical weapons disposal program is available at a redesigned Web site: <http://www.pccd.army.mil>.

To obtain comments or arrange an interview with a chemical weapons disposal program representative, contact the Public Outreach and Information Office at 1-800-488-0648.

Early morning Child Development hours

The CDC staff is considering opening the Aberdeen and Edgewood area centers Monday through Friday for Soldiers who participate in early morning physical training.

The rate would be \$23 per month for three days per week and \$40 per month for five days per week from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. These rates apply only for Soldiers participating in early morning PT.

For patrons not currently enrolled in the Child/Youth Services programs, an annual \$15 registration fee will be required.

If interested in using this service at the AA Child Development Center, call Ruth Strauss, 410-278-7111, or e-mail her at ruth.strauss@usag.apg.army.mil.

At the EA Center, call Myria Figueroa, 410-436-8361, or send an e-mail to myria.figueroa@usag.apg.army.mil.

Safety reminder

The APG Garrison Safety Council reminds motorists that turning on headlights is mandatory when operating windshield wipers. Turning them on at dusk is also a good safety habit.

EOC phone numbers

The Aberdeen Proving Ground Garrison Emergency Operations Center is under the direct control of the Directorate of Safety, Health and Environment/Fire Department. For information, call 410-278-3182 and 410-278-3183.

Flexible Spending Account open season begins soon

The Flexible Spending Account Open Season also coincides with the FEHB Open Season.

To enroll in the FSA, contact the carrier SHPS directly at Web site <https://www.fsa-feds.com/fsafeds/> or call 1-877-FSAFEDS (372-3337).

Questions may be directed to Teri Wright, CPAC, phone 410-278-4331, e-mail teri.wright@usag.apg.army.mil.



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Water line installation begins in January

DIO

Construction of a new water line in the Aberdeen Area is scheduled to begin the week of Jan. 5. Motorists and equipment operators are requested to proceed slowly and cautiously, and to obey traffic controls in the construction areas.

The construction will start at Phillips Airfield near Building 1081 and proceed northward along the west side of Airbase Loop Road. Near the intersection of Airbase Loop Road and Aviation Arms Road, the line will cross both roads and then proceed eastward along the north side of Aviation Arms Road to Tank Access Road. The line will then parallel the west side of Tank Access Road and cross out of the secure area to intersect School Road. It will then proceed north along School Road to the entrance to

building 5114.

Air Base Loop, Aviation Arms and Tank Access roads will experience lane closures during construction with one lane of traffic maintained during work hours and two lanes of traffic restored during non-work periods.

School Road will be closed from just north of the entrance to building 5114 to Pistol Road.

During construction along School Road, all traffic will be required to use Bel Air Street.

Work on the Tank Access Road and School Road portions of the project will be several weeks away. A reminder will be published prior to the closing of School Road.

For more information, call Jerry Norris, Directorate Of Installation Operations, 410-306-1159.



Community Notes

THURSDAY

**DECEMBER 25
CHRISTMAS DAY
SPECIALTY MEAL**

The Christmas Day Specialty Meal will be held in the Aberdeen Area dining facility, building 4503 for lunch, noon to 1:30 p.m. During this event all military personnel, family members, department of defense civilians, retirees and guests are invited to dine.

The standard meal rate of \$5.25 applies to any officer, enlisted member, and family member of sergeant or above, department of defense civilian, retiree and their guests. The discount meal rate of \$4.55 applies to spouses and other family members of enlisted personnel in ranks private through specialist/corporal.

The Christmas Day Specialty Menu includes cream of broccoli soup, roast prime rib of beef au jus, baked ham, roast turkey, honey glazed Cornish hens, mashed potatoes, scalloped sweet potatoes and apples, corn bread dressing, green beans with mushrooms, seasoned corn, turkey

gravy, brown and serve rolls, assorted salad bar, assorted salads, assorted pastries, soft serve yogurt with assorted toppings, assorted condiments and assorted beverages.

Note: Menu is subject to change without prior notification. For more information, call Edward Parylo or Ernest Green at 410-306-1393/1398.

**WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 31
NEW YEAR'S EVE MILITARY
FAMILY/SOLDIER PARTY**

All military families and soldiers from Aberdeen and Edgewood areas are invited to a New Year's Eve Military Family/Soldier Party, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m., at the Gunpowder Club, building E-4650.

Bring the entire family to the party. Food, drinks, music and party favors will be provided. There will be games, toys and crafts for the children, as well as childcare services.

The party will be split with one ballroom for children and the main ballroom for adults. Note:

Main ballroom strictly for adults only.

Cost is \$2 for adults. Children's admission is free but a donation is requested for the childcare providers. There is a room capacity so tickets should be reserved soon, or arrive early.

For more information or tickets, call Sharon Dixon, 410-297-6899.

**SATURDAY
JANUARY 3
WEE WONDERS IN WINTER**

The Anita C. Leight Estuary Center is sponsoring Wee Wonders in Winter, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. for ages 0 to 5 accompanied by an adult. Discover the world of winter with the wee ones. Join a naturalist on a little walk to avoid catching cabin fever. Reservations are required and space is limited. For more information, directions, or to make a reservation, call the Estuary Center at 410-612-1688 or 410-879-2000 extension 1688. The Anita C. Leight Estuary Center is located in southern Harford County, just east of Edgewood and 18 miles northeast of

Baltimore City at 700 Otter Point Road, Abingdon.

**SUNDAY
JANUARY 4
TURTLETIME**

The Anita C. Leight Estuary Center is sponsoring Turtle Time, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. for ages 6 to 9. Join the naturalist to explore the world of turtles with a story and craft, and then meet some turtle friends. The cost is \$3. Reservations are required and space is limited. For more information, directions, or to make a reservation, call the Estuary Center at 410-612-1688 or 410-879-2000 extension 1688. The Anita C. Leight Estuary Center is located in southern Harford County, just east of Edgewood and 18 miles northeast of Baltimore City at 700 Otter Point Road, Abingdon.

**SUNDAY AND MONDAY
JANUARY 4 AND 5
ST. PAUL'S PLAYERSTO
HOLD AUDITIONS**

The St. Paul's Players of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 201 Mount Royal Avenue at Route 22

in Aberdeen, will hold auditions for the spring 2004 production of the musical Bye, Bye, Birdie, 3 to 5 p.m., on Jan. 4 and 7 to 9 p.m., on Jan. 5 in the church Fellowship Hall. All auditioners are asked to bring a prepared song and to expect to read from the script and dance. All roles are open.

For more information, call Gail Bareham at 410-515-7767 or Michael Bareham at 410-272-3111.

**JANUARY 9
AMERICAN LEGION HOSTS
COMEDY SHOW**

American Legion Post 128, 44 North Parke Street, Aberdeen, will host a comedy show 7 to 10 p.m. with proceeds benefitting World War II veterans' memorial programs.

The show will feature comedy by John Dodge and Uncle Nic as well as Jim Bishop, who has appeared on Comedy Central and performs regularly in Atlantic City, N.J.

Cost is \$10 per person and includes finger food, draft beer and sodas. For reservations, call 410-272-9822.

TRICARE, Medicare, skilled nursing facility care, long-term care—similar names, different benefits

TRICARE

TRICARE, Medicare, skilled nursing facility care and long-term care—each has the word “care” in its name, but is in itself a totally unique health care benefit. So what are skilled nursing facility care and long-term care? Are either covered benefits under Medicare or TRICARE? What about TRICARE For Life? Does this mean TRICARE pays all health care expenses for eligible beneficiaries? Uniformed services beneficiaries, family members, survivors, or providers need to know the difference.

TRICARE

TRICARE is the Department of Defense medical entitlement program that covers eligible uniformed services beneficiaries (active duty, retirees, family members and survivors) for medically-necessary care. Eligible beneficiaries may receive care at either a DoD military treatment facility or from TRICARE-authorized civilian providers.

To be eligible for TRICARE, all uniformed services sponsors and family members must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS. Sponsors needing to enroll themselves or family members may contact or visit their unit personnel office, their nearest identification card issuing facility, or contact the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office (DSO) Telephone Center at 1-800-538-9552. To locate the nearest military ID card facility visit www.dmdc.osd.mil/rs/. Additional information on DEERS eligibility is available on the TRICARE Website at www.tricare.osd.mil/deers/default.cfm.

Medicare

Medicare is a health insurance program for people age 65 or older, people who are under age 65 and disabled, and those who have End-Stage Renal Disease. Medicare benefits are separated into two parts: Medicare Part A (hospital insurance), which helps pay for services such as hospital, skilled nursing facility care, home health and hospice care. Medicare Part B (medical insurance) helps pay for services such as doctors, outpatient care, laboratory tests, physical and occupational therapy, as well as health care services, for example, mammograms, flu shots and more.

Medicare, TRICARE and TRICARE For Life

For beneficiaries who are Medicare and TRICARE eligible, TRICARE and TRICARE For Life pay secondary to Medicare for services covered by Medicare and TRICARE. For health care services covered under Medicare but not TRICARE, beneficiaries are responsible for paying Medicare cost shares or deductibles. For health care services covered under TRICARE but not Medicare, beneficiaries are responsible for paying the TRICARE cost shares or deductibles. To use TRICARE or the dual eligible TFL benefits, Medicare-eligible beneficiaries regardless of their age must have Medicare Part A and be enrolled in Medicare Part B, if other than active duty family members. For Medicare-eligible active duty family members, when the sponsor retires, TRICARE requires family members purchase Medicare Part B, regardless of age, in order to continue TRICARE coverage. If a family member under age 65 does not purchase Medicare Part B at the time the sponsor retires, he/she may incur Medicare penalty costs when they apply for Medicare part B before they turn age 65. For beneficiaries who have other health insurance, TRICARE pays after all other insurance plans have paid.

Skilled Nursing Facility Care

Medicare and TRICARE cover only medically-necessary care. Skilled nursing facility care benefits are covered under both Medicare and TRICARE. A skilled nursing facility is defined as a facility that has the staff and equipment to provide skilled nursing care and/or skilled rehabilitation or other medically-necessary health care services to include prescription medications. Medicare and TRICARE cover medically necessary skilled nursing care and rehabilitative (physical, occupational and speech) therapies that are provided in the skilled nursing facility. The SNF covered benefits include room and board, prescribed drugs, laboratory work, supplies, appliances and medical equipment. For the SNF benefits to be covered by TRICARE the SNF must be Medicare-certified and enter into a participation agreement with TRICARE.

For SNF care to be covered under both

Medicare or TRICARE, eligible beneficiaries must have a qualifying hospital stay of three consecutive days or more, not including the day of discharge from the hospital. They must also enter the SNF within 30 days of being discharged from the hospital. If the qualifying hospital stay for the beneficiary is determined by Medicare to be not medically necessary, the SNF admission and any subsequent claims will be denied by Medicare and TRICARE. The beneficiary may appeal the denial through Medicare and through TRICARE if TRICARE is the primary payer.

Medicare limits the number of SNF care days it covers to 100 days for each spell of illness. TRICARE, however, covers SNF care for more than 100 days as long as the care is medically-necessary. After a dual-eligible beneficiary exhausts the 100-day Medicare SNF benefit, a Medicare claims denial for additional days must be sent to TRICARE before TRICARE can pay a beneficiary's SNF claim.

Long-Term Care/custodial care

A beneficiary's health care needs are reviewed at various times by staff members at a SNF to determine if skilled nursing care is still required. Though a determination may be made that skilled care is no longer medically-necessary, a beneficiary may still require assistance in performing “activities of daily living” which require a different type of service known as long term care, sometimes called “custodial care.”

Long-term care and any other service provided to assist a person with eating, dressing, bathing or performing activities of daily living, are not covered benefits under Medicare, TRICARE or TRICARE For Life. Whether the care is performed in a nursing home, assisted living facility or at a beneficiary's home, neither Medicare nor TRICARE will cover the cost of providing LTC. The cost of LTC coverage may vary and must be borne by the patient or through private long-term care insurance. To qualify for LTC benefits, most insurance carriers require that a person need assistance with at least two ADLs.

Long-Term Care insurance programs

As a result of fiscal year 2001 legislation, Congress authorized the Federal Long-Term

Care Insurance Program, sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management. Persons eligible to purchase LTC coverage provided by the government include: active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, certain members of the Reserves and their family members; employees of the federal government and their spouses, parents, step-parents, parent-in-laws and adult children. Additional information on federal long-term care insurance is available at www.opm.gov/insure/lte/ or by calling 1-800-LTC-FEDS or 1-800-582-3337.

Many commercial insurance carriers also offer long-term care products and services for people needing assistance with medical or non-medical personal care needs. Beneficiaries who require additional information on long-term care, may contact the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at 1-800-Medicare or 1-800-633-4227, to request a copy of “Choosing Long Term Care: A Guide for People with Medicare.”

Contacts for beneficiaries needing assistance

Beneficiaries who need assistance understanding or using their TRICARE or TFL benefits are encouraged to contact their regional health services and support contractor for assistance. A list of regional toll-free numbers for HSSCs is available on the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil. Beneficiaries may also contact their local TRICARE Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator. Telephone numbers and contact information for BCACs are available on the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/bcactirectory.cfm. Beneficiaries may also contact the DOD TRICARE Information Center 1-888-DOD-LIFE or 1-888-363-5433, for up-to-date TRICARE information.

Beneficiaries needing additional information regarding Medicare benefits may contact the Social Security Administration, toll-free at 1-800-772-1213. Additional Medicare information is available at www.medicare.gov.

Although the overall benefit for each of these programs may vary, TRICARE, Medicare, skilled nursing facility care and long-term care are each committed to providing beneficiaries with the care they need to restore wellness and health.

APG supports 3-D month

The staff at the Army Substance Abuse Program reminds everyone that December is “National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month” or “3-D Month which is an effort to bring special attention to the problem of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

“Driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs is a dangerous practice with tragic consequences,” said Col. Mardi U. Mark, garrison and deputy installation commander.

The ASAP office still has red ribbons to display on cars to show an individual's and Aberdeen Proving Ground's collective support of the MADD “Tie One On For Safety” campaign.

“I encourage everyone to display the red ribbon and to heed the message it conveys,” Mark said.

For information, call 410-278-DRUG (3784).



Maryland's Drunk Driving Laws

The blood alcohol concentration level required in Maryland's Drunk Driving laws have been reduced.

A BAC level of .08 or more is Driving Under the Influence and carries the following penalties:

- **Mandatory 45-day suspension of license for first offense**
- **Mandatory 90-day suspension of license for second offense**
- **12 points**
- **Up to \$1000 and/or one year in jail for 1st offense**
- **Up to \$2000 and/or two years in jail for 2nd offense**

A BAC level of .07 is Driving Under the Influence carries the following penalties:

- **Up to 60-day suspension of license**
- **Eight points**
- **Up to \$500 and/or two months in jail for first offense**
- **Up to \$500 and/or one year in jail for second offense**

Refusal to take a breath test can now be admitted as evidence during a trial and has a mandatory 120-day suspension of license.

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EXODUS

From page 1

Ordnance Battalion and about 180 Marines, organizers stayed busy tracking movements and ensuring each service member got on their way safely.

"Overall, everything is going pretty smooth," said Sgt. 1st Class Vincent McCormick, 143rd S-3 Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, who led the sign in operations, assisted by Staff Sgt. Irvin Collins.

"The first think we do is sign them in to make sure everyone has arrived," McCormick said.

Working his second Exodus, he added that teams of OC&S noncommissioned officers serving as chaperones would be on hand throughout the day to assist with any problems, until the last service member departed.

"The system is working well," he said. "Problems will pop up but that's what we're here for."

Staff Sgt. Casey Scott, 16th Ordnance Battalion, S-3, said that the 143rd was handling the departure operations and that the 16th would handle arrivals, Jan. 2 and 3.

"Some of our chaperone NCOs arrived at midnight for Soldiers who had 2 a.m. departures," Scott said.

"It's a long operation that takes planning months ahead of time, but it's worth it to make sure there are no delays or problems," he said. "The chain of command has done this before and it shows."

Gunnery Sgt. William Cowger, U.S. Marine Corps Detachment, added that unlike the Soldiers, most Marines were traveling in civilian attire.

"We do it in the interest of safety so they don't become targets," Cowger said.

Inside the USO, volunteers offered coffee, snacks and beverages and the troops relaxed before their flights in the spacious lounge or watched the wide screen television. The lounge also had a luggage closet and a computer lab.

USO officials on hand included Elaine Rogers, Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan USO; Adrienne Trout, director BWI USO; Tracey Steele, USO volunteer coordinator; and Beth Bradner, director of development, marketing and events.

Bradner said that in addition to the Exodus, troops arriving for 'R&R' leave and departing for Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as about 2,000 Soldiers from Fort Lee, Va., also headed home for holiday leave, added to the day's activities.

"We expect another R&R flight this afternoon," Bradner said. "It will be a full day for all of us."

Col. Paul Meredith, OC&S deputy to the commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Manuel Torres, 61st Ordnance Brigade, led the cadre of battalion commanders, sergeant majors, and unit commanders who were on hand to oversee the movement.

The service members seemed impressed with all that had been put into motion just for them.

"This is pretty smooth," said Marine Pfc. Tyler Beck as he and several friends checked out robots in an airport toy store while awaiting their flights.

Bound for Seattle, Wash., Beck said that his parents had purchased his tickets and that his cadre had handled all other matters.

"I received all the help I needed from the staff," Beck said.

"It's really impressive how the USO takes care of soldiers," added Staff Sgt. Jeremy Thompson, a 143rd chaperone. "I came through here as a young soldier eight years ago and it was nothing like this."



From left, rear, Pvt. Michael Cutts and Anthony Page, Company A, 143rd Ordnance Battalion, and Pvt. Brian Waits, Company C, 16th Ordnance Battalion, watch as relaxation therapist Lisa Washington gives Pvt. Adam Sheldon, Company A, 16th Ordnance Battalion a free massage in the USO while they await their flights during Exodus.



Staff Sgt. Irvin Collins, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Vincent McCormick, 143rd Ordnance Battalion S-3, review troop sign in rosters outside the USO International Gateway Lounge at BWI Airport.



Raymond Shipley, Maryland Veterans of Foreign Wars state commander, chats with departing Soldiers, Army Reserve Spc. Ginella Johnson, left, and Staff Sgt. Mark Orton, 422nd Civil Affairs Command, Greensboro, N.C., during the mass Exodus at BWI Airport, Dec. 19. Shipley visited with soldiers from APG as well as deploying troops to show his support for America's armed forces.

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Testing conducted in the Soldier Systems Center arctic chamber at minus 60 F showed that the fan can increase the temperature 1 foot off the floor by more than 20 F.

This is important because soldiers sleep on or near the floor, and the most difficult parts to keep warm are the feet.

"With the fan we can have the stove barely on and it will warm you throughout the tent, whereas before you had to be right on the stove to stay warm, and your backside was still cold," said Staff Sgt. Chris Harder in Fort Gordon, Ga. "I wish I had these in my unit over in Korea. It would make a huge change in wintertime comfort."

When placed on a heater surface, the self-powered fan converts a small amount of heat energy directly into electricity to drive the fan's impeller. It improves the performance of the heater by creating warmth throughout a larger area with the same fuel consumption, or it can heat the same area with less fuel.

Reduced fuel consumption, primarily JP-8 or diesel, is an important advantage because fuel must be transported along with the field unit, costing the Army as much as \$12 to \$20 per gallon.

Logistic fuel is considerably more important than ammunition at every point along the battlefield except at the leading edge of the fighting, and even there fuel is more valued from time to time, according to Gen. Paul Kern, U.S. Army Materiel Command commander, speaking at the Society of Automotive Engineers World Congress in March 2003. Fuel use is critical to the Army because fueling stations are remote in a

combat zone.

In cold climates, the Army has estimated that a single fan can save as much as 320 gallons of heating oil in one heating season. Actual results depend on the local climate and annual "degree-days," which is the difference between 65 degrees F and the day's average temperature.

Since the fan's introduction in 2000, the Defense Logistics Agency has received orders for more than 6,000 fans. Units can purchase the fan, currently priced at \$590, through the DLA Web site at www.dscpl.dla.mil or order it through the MILSTRIP system.

For more information about the Soldier Systems Center, visit Web site <http://www.natick.army.mil>.



Thermoelectric fan (TEF) http://www.dscpl.dla.mil/gi/general/fosh/family_of_space_heaters_flyer.doc



Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

2003 MWR Holiday Schedule

Activity	Wednesday Dec. 24	Friday Dec. 26	Saturday Dec. 27	Sunday Dec. 28	Monday Dec. 29	Tuesday Dec. 30	Wednesday Dec. 31	Friday Jan. 2	Saturday Jan. 3	Sunday Jan. 4
Arts & Crafts AA	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	10 a.m. to 7 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed
Arts & Crafts EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Athletic Center	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Auto Crafts	Closed	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.			
Bowling Center	Closed	5 to 10 p.m.	2 to 10:30 p.m.	1 p.m. to 6 p.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed	5 to 10 p.m.	2 to 10 p.m.	1 to 6 p.m.
Equipment Rental Center	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	9 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Closed
Exton*	8 a.m. to 2 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 2 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Fitness Center AA	5:30 to 10:30 a.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed	5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed
Hoyle Gym/ Fitness Center	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Ticket and Registration	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Library AA	11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Closed	1 to 5 p.m.	1 to 5 p.m.	11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Closed	11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Closed	1 p.m. to 5 p.m.	1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Library EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Recreation Center AA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Snack Bar	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Recreation Center EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Snack Bar	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Ruggles*	8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

*In the event of inclement weather, the course will be closed and signs posted.
Note: All MWR activities are closed Christmas and New Year's Day.

Activities

Methods of registration

Registering for any MWR event can be accomplished by visiting the specific facility for the event, mailing in a registration form found in an MWR Program Brochure, visiting the MWR Registration, building 3326, or online at www.apgmwr.com.

Mat Pilates instructor certification

Mat Pilates Instructor Certification will be held Jan. 11, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the AA Fitness Center, building 3320. Cost is \$99 (study guides are extra). Learn the history of pilates, myths and misconceptions, the six basic principles, 30 mat pilates exercises and how to incorporate pilates in an aerobic class or make it a class of its own. At the end of this workshop, applicants must pass a 100-question test and practical to receive certification. Deadline for registration is Dec. 27.

New Years Eve Bowl

Come spend an exciting New Year's Eve with the whole family. Be able to bowl the night away and spend the evening with the children. Bowling begins at 10 p.m., Dec. 31 at the APG Bowling Center. Cost is \$25 per couple or \$15 per person. Price includes food, soda, cosmic bowling and shoes. Register by Dec. 22.

Checkmate

Learn the fundamentals of chess, how to keep score, and

get the basic moves to have the ultimate strategy. This four-week class will be held on Thursdays starting Jan. 6 at 6 p.m. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$15 for families. Master the principals of sound offensive and defensive maneuvers and experience all the fun and satisfaction of doing it.

The Art of Scrapbooking

Starting on Tuesday, Jan. 6 at Russell Gym, learn the art of scrapbooking. Class will teach how to organize, document, and preserve family photographs, memorabilia and histories. Cost is \$25. Register by Jan. 5.

Carpentry for the novice

This hands-on instruction in the art of carpentry will teach people the basic cuts with various saws and how to put the pieces together for the desired finished product. Classes will teach participants the skills they need to become proficient in wood working procedures. Classes will be held on Thursday starting Jan. 8 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the EA Arts and Crafts. Cost is \$35. Register by Jan. 6.

Bowling for Beginners

Every Wednesday Jan. 7 through 28 from 6 to 7 p.m. at the APG Bowling Center classes will be held to teach the basic fundamentals of bowling: how to keep score, what type of equipment to use, the proper rolling techniques,

lane spotting procedures, best lane approach and types of ball releases. Classes will orient the participants to all aspects of bowling and prepare them to acquire the skills necessary to become proficient in the sport. Register by Jan. 5. Cost is \$20.

Carpentry for the novice

This hands-on instruction in the art of carpentry will teach people the basic cuts with various saws and how to put the pieces together for the desired finished product. Classes will teach participants the skills they need to become proficient in wood working procedures. Classes will be held on Thursday starting Jan. 8 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the EA Arts and Crafts. Cost is \$35. Register by Jan. 6.

Leaping ski trip getaway

Take a motorcoach trip to Poconos, Pa., and do a little skiing and relaxing.

Stay two nights in the Ramada Inn Hotel, Feb. 27 through 29, receive meals and a premium open bar. Cost is \$209 (quad), \$229 (triple) and \$239 (double).

Pick up and return locations to be determined by number of registered patrons. Deposit of \$65 is due on Jan. 9.

Sewing 101

Sewing 101 classes will be held, 6 to 8 p.m., every Friday, Jan. 9 through Feb. 13, at Russell Gymnasium, building 3330. Classes cost \$25. Learn how to stitch and sew various fabrics and how to achieve the best and most efficient results from the sewing machine. Register by Jan. 7.

SCHOOL LIAISON/YOUTH EDUCATION

FINANCING COLLEGE EDUCATION

Information is available on college scholarships and loans at the School Liaison/Youth Education Services office, building 2752. If interested, call Ivan Mehosky at 410-278-2857.

SCHOOLS OUT

To get the latest information on Harford County Public School closings throughout the year, visit www.schools-out.com. For more information, call 410-588-5203.

TEENAGERS PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

Based on the national best-

seller by Chad Foster, and read by over a half million teenagers across the country, Ivan Mehosky will be taking sign-ups starting Jan. 12 through 28, for APG teens 13 years of age and up for a series of evening classes starting in February. Meeting dates, times and location will be announced pending interest (parents will be notified). Using a video, lecture, group discussion and student workbook, Chad Foster relates to young people and delivers the messages that parents, educators, and employers value and reward. Through inspirational and entertaining stories about people like

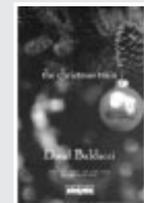
Michael Jordan, Elton John, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, the teaching topics and the book's messages of success focus on: pursuit of dreams, communication skills, early career preparation, networking skills, integrity and community service. (About the Author: Chad Foster is one of America's most sought-after motivational speakers. Through in-person appearances or his video, he shares his messages of success with more than 120,000 students and educators each year.) For more information or to sign-up, call Ivan Mehosky at 410-278-2857.

LIBRARY BOOK CORNER

The following is a list of some Christmas related stories available at the APG MWR libraries:

Christmas Train

by David Baldacci
Tom Langdon must take the train if he has any chance of arriving in Los Angeles in time for Christmas with his girlfriend. To finance the trip, he sells a story about a train ride taken during the Christmas season. Thereupon begins one of the most hilarious and heartwarming journeys ever told. Along the way, Tom encounters a ridiculous cast of characters, unexpected romance, and an avalanche that changes everyone's Christmas plans.



This Year it will be Different

by Maeve Binchy

Christmas Stories for the Heart

by Alice Gray

Scarpetta's Winter Tale

by Patricia Cornwell

Star Bright! A Christmas Story

by Andrew Greeley

Skipping Christmas

by John Grisham

An Irish Christmas

by John B. Keane

Giovanni's Light

by Phyllis Theroux

Operating hours of the Aberdeen Area Library, building 3320, are Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m., and Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Edgewood Area library is open Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. For information, call 410-436-3589.

The library's Web site, www.apgmwr.com/recreation/libraries.html, provides access to the library's online catalog and also has a complete annotated listing of the library's new material.

APGFCU launches Education Department

Amy Sweet
APGFCU

Aberdeen Proving Ground Federal Credit Union has established a separate Education Department to concentrate on financial literacy within the Harford and Cecil County communities. Its new community charter makes membership in the credit union open to anyone who lives or works in those two counties.

"APGFCU has long been a leader in the area of financial literacy and education for our members," said Don Lewis, President/CEO of the \$500 million asset credit union. "We have delivered that message through our Youth Education Services team that this year alone has made 170 presentations to over 5,000 children. I am eager to have the new Education Department continue those efforts and expand its reach to adults, neighborhood organizations, and civic groups throughout the commu-

nity." This new APGFCU initiative will create strategic partnerships, strengthen current alliances, and use the credit union's new community charter to make financial education available to everyone who lives or works in Harford or Cecil county's APGFCU has carved out a unique niche in the credit union movement with this new department dedicated exclusively to financial literacy outreach.

The Education Department is based at APGFCU's Edgewood Operations Center and includes Education Specialists Jennifer Kaiser and Christina Polanowski.

Team leader Tina Ripken shared that "The objective of the Education Department will be to make APGFCU the leading community resource for financial literacy education and to deliver the best in money management education at every possible opportunity."

Consider donating use or lose leave

CPAC

As the leave year draws to an end on Jan. 10, many employees find themselves with annual leave they are unable to use. The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, or VLTP, offers employees a means to transfer, or donate their annual leave to fellow employees with medical emergencies.

Donations may be made to any qualified federal employee (a local list is printed every other week in the APG News).

In most cases, to be eligible for donations a federal employee must have exhausted both their annual and sick leave balances in accordance with program guidelines.

In order to donate to a local employee, the donor must complete the OPM 630-A, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, indicating the intended recipient and number of hours to be donated. This form is submitted through their supervisor to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.

To donate to a federal employee from an outside agency, the donor must complete an OPM Form 630-B, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient (Outside Agency), under the leave transfer program.

By law, annual leave is the only leave allowable for transfer/donation (Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 630. Leave donations are not tax deductible).

In a leave year, a leave donor may donate no more than a total of one-half of the amount of annual leave he or she would be entitled to accrue during the leave year in which the donation is made. The limitations on donating leave, as cited above, can be waived if the donor is a family member of the recipient. If employee is in the eight-hour leave accrual category, the maximum that can be donated is 104 hours; in the six-hour category, 78 hours; and in the four-hour category, 52 hours.

Leave must be submitted by Dec. 31, 2003. Submitting the appropriate forms prior to the end of the leave year will ensure timely processing.

Completed forms may be faxed to 410-278-7652.

For more information, call Ronda McKinney, 410-278-8988 or e-mail ronda.mckinney@usag.apg.army.mil.

LEAVE DONATION

To participate in the Voluntary Leave Program, use forms OPM 630, Application to Become a Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program; OPF 630-A, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (within agency); and OPM 630-B, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (outside agency). Employees leaving the program should contact Melda Callender, 410-278-8997, or e-mail melda.callender@usag.apg.army.mil, to complete a termination form.

Employees eligible for donations in the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program

- | | |
|--|--|
| Mildred T. Becker (surgery) | Danny Kopp (lung cancer) |
| Marian Bellis (fracture of left tibia) | Angela R. Little (neck and shoulder injury) |
| Tammy Budkey | William B. McLean (kidney failure) |
| Patricia Burcham (caring for father, Arthur Cummings, ATC retired) | Shirley M. Orlovicz (back surgery) |
| Jane E. Calahan | Calvin E. Peake |
| Jackie Childress | Karen S. Pense |
| Joseph Dugan | Linda M. D. Queen |
| David Fletcher | Tess Ramos (lung surgery) |
| Renee Gaffney | Michael Reynolds |
| John Gage | Cheryl L. Roark |
| Patty Gibson | Matthew Ryan |
| Edgar W. Greer | Lori Scherzo |
| Melanie A. Hoffman (parasitosis, fibromyalgia condition) | Marquerite Soper |
| Richard Hoffman | Eunice Thompson |
| Beth Kelly | Alison Tichenor |
| Beverly King (caring for husband) | Sandra M. Wachter (surgery) |
| Pamela Klinger | Charles Young (kidney and pancreas transplant) |

Health & Safety

An important message about TRICARE and Medicare

TRICARE

The House and Senate passed the "Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003." The president is expected to sign the bill into law shortly. This bill is extensive and complex, and it makes dramatic changes to Medicare. It is important for uniformed services beneficiaries to understand the effect these changes may have on them in the near future and in the years to come.

A preliminary assessment of some of the bill's provisions is presented below. If beneficiaries have questions about TRICARE benefits, contact a local TRICARE Service Center for assistance.

Medicare prescription drug benefits

For most Americans, the most significant aspect of the new bill is that it introduces an outpatient prescription drug benefit. This does not affect uniformed services beneficiaries, their TRICARE pharmacy benefits will continue as a separate program.

Beneficiaries who desire to participate in the Medicare outpatient prescription plan should enroll when first eligible. If a beneficiary does not enroll when first eligible, and subsequently desires to do so, an annual late penalty would normally be assessed. However, TRICARE pharmacy benefits are considered a creditable prescription plan under the bill, and as such, uniformed services beneficiaries who do not enroll in the Medicare prescription drug benefit when first eligible do not have to pay an annual penalty if they subsequently enroll because they involuntarily lost their eligibility under TRICARE.

Individuals could involuntarily lose their TRICARE eligibility when a dependent widow or widower remarries a person who is not a uniformed services member or retiree, or when a dependent and member or retired member divorce, and the dependent spouse does not qualify under the law as an eligible former

spouse for TRICARE benefits.

The TRICARE pharmacy benefit provides excellent coverage and wide availability of services through military facilities, retail pharmacies, and mail order. Thus, it is likely that the vast majority of uniformed services beneficiaries will not find it advantageous to enroll in the new Medicare pharmacy benefit. TRICARE and Medicare will need to establish procedures for coordination of benefits for beneficiaries who do decide to sign up for the Medicare benefit.

Part B premiums

The bill makes three very important changes relating to enrollment in Medicare Part B, the Supplementary Medical Insurance Program. The first two changes affect persons not enrolled, or paying surcharges because they enrolled after they were initially eligible for Part B.

First, uniformed services beneficiaries who would be eligible for TRICARE For Life, but are not enrolled in Medicare Part B, may enroll without penalty during a special enrollment period through Dec. 31, 2004. The special enrollment period will be announced via Medicare on the TRICARE Web site, www.tricare.osd.mil, and publicized widely.

Second, uniformed services beneficiaries who enrolled in Medicare Part B in 2001, 2002, 2003, or 2004 and are subject to a premium surcharge for late enrollment in Part B can get those surcharges eliminated by demonstrating that they are covered under TRICARE. The elimination of surcharges is effective Jan. 1, 2004, but the Department of Health and Human Services will need to work out procedures to be followed. Procedures will be announced via Medicare on the TRICARE Web site, www.tricare.osd.mil, and publicized widely.

The third change made by the bill affects all seniors, not just uniformed services beneficiaries. The Part B premium will be

tied to income, beginning in 2007. Individuals with incomes above \$80,000 will pay more, and couples with incomes above \$160,000 will pay more.

Medicare advantage program

The bill introduces several enhancements to the current Medicare+Choice program that are expected to increase the availability of private plans offering benefits to Medicare beneficiaries.

TRICARE For Life beneficiaries can enroll in Medicare+Choice plans (and TRICARE will reimburse their copayments).

More details about Medicare+Choice plans are available on the Medicare Web site, <http://www.medicare.gov/Choices>. Most people eligible for Medicare use traditional fee-for-service Medicare.

The bill includes provisions for a pilot program beginning in 2010 (the Comparative Cost Adjustment program) that could result in increased Part B premiums for persons in traditional fee-for-service Medicare, if sicker patients gravitate to private plans in the test sites.

Provider reimbursement provisions

The bill includes numerous provisions relating to reimbursement of hospitals, physicians, and other service providers. Significantly, physicians will receive a 1.5 percent payment increase in 2004 for 2005, rather than the reduction that was anticipated.

Medicare Part B Deductible

The bill increases the Medicare Part B deductible to \$110 in 2005 and indexes it to inflation for subsequent years. This should have minimal impact on uniformed services beneficiaries, since the Medicare deductible is payable by TRICARE.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces recall

CPSC

In cooperation with Emerson Electric Co., of St. Louis, Mo., is voluntarily recalling the Craftsman 16-gallon and RIDGID 12- and 16-gallon wet/dry vacuums. The vacuums are used to pick up wet and dry debris. Another feature of the vacuum is the blower, which provides additional cleaning functions.

The exhaust blower ports on the wet/dry vacuums are large enough for a small child to reach inside and touch the spinning blower wheel. This poses a laceration hazard to small children.

Emerson Tool Company has received 10 reports of children inserting their arms into the ports and receiving minor cuts and abrasions to their fingertips.

The vacuums were sold at Home Depot stores and RIDGE Tool distributors nationwide from March 1999 through October 2002 and Sears Roebuck and Co. stores nationwide from September 1998 through October 2002 for between \$70 and \$300.

Consumers should contact Emerson toll-free number to request a free insert. The insert is installed inside the blower port to eliminate the hazard.

For more information, call Emerson Tool Company toll-free at 1-800-359-0179, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday or visit the firm's Web site at www.wetdryvacrecall.com.

The serial number range/date serial number range provides the first five characters of the serial number/date code listed on the product's data plate.

Wet/dry vacuums include the following items:

RIDGID 12-Gallon Wet/Dry Vac
\$74, model number WD12450,
serial number WD12450, 01310-02193
RIDGID 16-Gallon Wet/Dry Vac
\$94, WD16350, 01309-02168
\$119, WD16600, 99168-02155
\$119, WD16650, 01311-02162
\$139, WD17350, 01313-02045
\$139, WD17351, 02043-02178
Craftsman 16-Gallon Wet/Dry Vac
\$139, 113.170250, 02049-02210
\$139, 113.170260, 98240-00236
\$119, 113.17033, 02156-02219
\$293, 113.292670C, 99281C-00319C
\$293, 113.295670C, 00227C-02122C

To see a picture of the recalled item, use the following link: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml04/04053.html>



RIDGID 16 Gallon Wet/Dry Vac and the Craftsman 16 Gallon Wet/Dry Vac

Tips to prevent home fires from space heaters

CPSC

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reminds consumers to follow safety precautions when purchasing and using electric or fuel-fired space heaters.

In a recent year, there were about 10,900 residential fires and about 190 deaths associated with portable or fixed local heaters.

Fuel-burning space heaters also can cause carbon monoxide poisoning and indoor air pollution because of improper venting or incomplete combustion.

"CPSC has worked with industry to improve safety standards for space heaters," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton, "but consumers must exercise care in how they use space heaters."

• Choose a space heater that has been tested to the latest safety standards and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. These heaters will have the most up-to-date safety features, while older space heaters may not meet the

newer safety standards.

CPSC worked to upgrade industry standards for electric, kerosene, and vented and unvented gas space heaters. An automatic cut-off device is now required to turn off electric or kerosene heaters if they tip over.

More guarding around the heating coils of electric heaters and the burner of kerosene heaters also is required to prevent fires. CPSC worked to upgrade the industry standard for unvented gas heaters to provide an oxygen depletion sensor to shut off the heater if the oxygen level drops too low. CPSC and industry amended the vented heater standard to provide a spill switch to turn off the heater if the vent is blocked or disconnected.

• Select a space heater with a guard around the flame area or heating element. Place the heater on a level, hard and non-flammable surface, not on rugs or carpets or near bedding or drapes. Keep the heater at least three feet from bedding, drapes,

furniture, or other flammable materials.

• Keep doors open to the rest of the house if you are using an unvented fuel-burning space heater. This helps prevent pollutant build-up and promotes proper combustion. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to provide sufficient combustion air to prevent CO production.

• Never leave a space heater on when sleeping. Never place a space heater close to any sleeping person.

• Turn the space heater off if leaving the area. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.

• Have a smoke alarm with fresh batteries on each level of the house and inside every bedroom. In addition, have a carbon monoxide alarm outside the bedrooms in each separate sleeping area.

• Be aware that mobile homes require specially designed heating equipment.

• Have gas and kerosene space heaters inspected annually.

Portable generator safety tips

CPSC

When extended power outages are caused when blizzards, severe thunderstorms, hurricanes and tropical storms sweep through Maryland, portable generators invariably become rare commodities.

Portable generators can be hazardous if used improperly. The two biggest hazards include carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust and electrocution from connecting the generator to the home electrical wiring system.

Following Hurricane Isabel, three deaths were caused due to carbon monoxide poisoning from generators running inside the homes.

Residential use of portable generators is growing rapidly. As the average age of homeowners goes up, their tolerance for the more frequent and longer power outages that we are likely to experience is going down.

With this has come complacency about portable generators. There is less concern with safety, installation, and operation of emergency power sources and more with creature comforts that generators give.

Many people think of generators as just another home appliance. The refrigerator is safe, so is the TV. The new generator must be also. It has a UL (Underwriters Laboratory) sticker.

Making it different

A gasoline engine usually drives a portable emergency power source. When gasoline engines are running they give off carbon monoxide, a deadly gas.

Air-cooled engines run very hot. A generator can easily start a fire with its exhaust. This is basic common sense; everyone knows that running an engine in an enclosed area is hazardous to life and property.

Homeowners must abide by all federal, state and local regulations when using generators. Get a licensed electrician and all permits necessary before even thinking about hooking a generator to home wiring. Read the owners manual and follow all the manufacturer recommendations.

Grounding

If a customer bought an expensive generator that is equipped with a GFI (Ground Fault Interrupter), a GFI might not function at all if the generator is not properly grounded.

Using generators safely

Consumer Product Safety Commission wants consumers to know that portable generators can be hazardous if used improperly. The hazards are: (1) carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust and (2) electrocution from connecting the generator to the home electrical wiring system.

Avoiding carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning

• Never use a generator indoors or in attached garages.
• Only operate the generator outdoors in a well-ventilated, dry area, away from air intakes to the home, and protected from direct exposure to rain and snow, preferably under a canopy, open shed, or carport.

Avoiding electrocution

• Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy duty,

outdoor rated cords with a wire gauge adequate for the appliance load.

• Observe the generator manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.

• Do not plug the generator into a wall outlet.

• If connecting the generator into the house wiring is necessary, have a qualified electrician hook up the standby electrical system, or have the local utility install a linking device if available.

Never store gasoline in the home.

Gasoline, kerosene and other flammable liquids should be stored outside of living areas in properly labeled, non-glass safety containers. They should also not be stored in a garage if a fuel-burning appliance in the garage. The vapor from gasoline can travel invisibly along the ground and be ignited by pilot lights or arcs caused by activating electric switches.

• Exhaust fumes can be deadly, so run your generator only outside. Also, store fuel safely.

• Never plug a generator into a regular household outlet - it can "energize" dead power lines and injure neighbors or utility workers.

• Connecting the house without a safety transfer switch can damage the generator when electricity is restored.

• Permanent installations require an Electrical Permit and inspection.

Important safety precautions:

• Locate your generator in a well-ventilated area. Never run it inside, even in your garage. Gasoline-powered generators produce carbon monoxide and the fumes can be deadly.

• Second, plug appliances directly into the generator using heavy duty, properly grounded extension cords. Make sure that extension cords are not frayed or worn. Do not overlook the appliance or tools grounding requirements when hooking it to a generator. Always use three-pronged extension cords in good condition and correct size. Using the wrong cords may damage the generator or its load.

• Do not connect a power generator directly to the home's main fuse box or circuit panel. Limit the number of appliances you use to no more than the recommended wattage of the generator.

• Read all instructions carefully and follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

• Use the generator only when necessary, and don't overload it. Turn it off at night while sleeping and when away from home, to avoid possible fire hazard.

Don't connect generator to home wiring. For personal safety and the safety of neighbors - do not attempt to connect a generator to home wiring.

If there are any doubts about how to properly use a portable electric generator, contact the manufacturer or a licensed electrician for assistance.

More information can be found at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/portgend.html>.

HOMECOMING

From page 1

In the early days of deployment, Lisa said communication was, at best, once a week.

"Some families did not hear from their Soldiers for up to a month at a time. Soldiers did not have e-mail access," Lisa said. "We had heard about a weeks ago that they were coming back, but we didn't know what day."

Spc. Theresa Kauffman, of Harrisburg, Pa., husband of Cpl. Dale Kauffman III, said her daughter, Madison, was just three months old when he left. "Now, at 11 months, she's really grown," she said.

Word had spread that the Soldiers were entering APG through the Maryland Boulevard gate and were to be dropped off at another location and march from there to the Recreation Center.

Instead, the buses pulled directly in front of the building, prompting family members to run outside and into the arms of their Soldiers.

Sgt. Sandra Schetrepf's family traveled from Ohio to see her. Her son, Shayne Harris, 14, daughter, Elizabeth 4, parents, Patricia and Joseph, grandmother, Christine, sister, Jennifer and her husband, Chris all said the long trip "was worth it."

Spc. April Knott said she cried when she learned she was coming back home.

Heather Rohrer and children, Hannah, 3, and Jeremy, 4, had a tearful reunion with husband and father, Spc. Michael Rohrer.

"It's been hardest for the kids," said Heather.

115th arrival

Maryland Governor Robert Ehrlich arrived at Russell Gymnasium early Friday morning and spoke with family members as they waited for the arrival of the 115th MP Battalion.

Almost 250 family members, including wives, mothers, sons, daughters, grandparents and others, after patiently waiting in their seats, instantly jumped to their feet and ran to greet their Soldiers in cries of jubilation as strains of "I Am A Soldier," by Toby Keith played.

Ehrlich personally greeted each of the Soldiers entering the gym.

Although no official speeches were given, Maj. Gen. John C. Doesburg, commander of APG and Mark, Maj. Gen. Bruce F. Tuxill, the adjutant general, Maryland National Guard and Brig. Gen. Warner I. Sumpter, assistant adjutant general, attended the welcome home gathering.

"I am pleased to see these warriors returning safely to APG," said Mark. "We are proud of what they have done and thank them for being super citizen soldiers."

The plane had taken a long and complicated route - from Kuwait to Cypress to Shannon, Ireland to Niagra, New York to Maine and made a final landing at Andrews Air Force Base.

One Soldier was heard to say "it took 35 hours to get from point A to APG."

The battalion's mission was to guard Iraqi detainees at Baghdad Airport. The unit is stationed in Salisbury and Parkville, Md.

Susanne Miller and her son, Kaleb, 2, knew officially two weeks ago her husband, Staff Sgt. Erik Miller, was coming home. His civilian job is a police officer at APG.

Speaking about her husband's deployment to Iraq, Susanne said, "I was very frightened, especially when on the news every day we were hearing about another fatality or severe injury. This is a very nice Christmas present."

Susanne said that Kaleb missed his father and would ask "My daddy, where's my daddy?"

Linda Albowicz, wife of Staff Sgt. Stacey Albowicz of Baltimore, said that her husband had to wash his clothes by hand because there was no washing machine.

"He really missed that," she said. "I sent him a camp shower because there weren't any showers there, and I also sent fans because it was so hot," she

added.

Martha Joiner, mother of Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Flowers, was dressed in patriotic colors and held two flags. Joiner was there with Flowers' wife, Diane.

"As soon as we leave, we'll be going to see the kids," said Joiner. "We knew he might be arriving early this morning, so we left the children with my mom," Diane said.

Shana Robinson was waiting for her husband, Sfc. Theodore Robinson. He had been deployed once before during Operation Desert Storm.

Tearful and clutching tissues in her hand, Robinson said, "It's just been nonstop crying. I wasn't sure if they were coming over here, and I just drove over to the building where they said they were coming from to make sure."

After speaking with Ehrlich, Carol Leavitt, wife of Capt. Edwin Leavitt, said "It shows he really cares."

The arrival of the troops just before Christmas was a present most did not anticipate.

"This couldn't be at a better time," said Carol. "We were concerned that he was going to miss Christmas. He's like a kid, he loves Christmas," she said.

Leavitt's two children, Amanda, 9, and Taryn, 6, were also very glad their dad was coming home. Amanda missed playing with her dad.

"We played hide and seek and claw. He would tickle me until my face turned red, and he helped me with my homework," Amanda said.

Master Sgt. Bill King and his wife, Joan, wasted no time catching up with one another's lives. King, a 25-year veteran of the National Guard, said what he missed most was food and a bed. "We had cots to sleep on," said King. "It's great to come home for Christmas. We'll be getting a pass until Monday, and then we start out processing."

The battalion has been deployed numerous times since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001-assistance at the Pentagon immediately following the terrorist attack; remobilized on Oct. 1, 2001, in support of Operation Noble Eagle; and deployed on Oct. 13, 2002 for Fort Stewart, Ga., to provide force protection.

In December 2002, the 115th was sent to Guantanamo Bay in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, to conduct in-processing for al-Qaida and Taliban detainees and to oversee the operations of Camp X-Ray until June 2002.

Each returning Soldier received a patriotic snow globe and a phone card from VFW Post 8126, Havre de Grace. The globe features the Statue of Liberty, American flags and plays "The Star Spangled Banner."

Penny Cacoulidis, installation transportation officer at APG and a member of the Ladies Auxiliary with VFW Post 8126, handed out the globes and cards to all of the Soldiers.

"It's to say thank you for a job well done," Cacoulidis said. "Hallmark donated the globes to the VFW national headquarters to be distributed among requesting VFWs."

Any VFW that contacted them and said they wanted them could have them. We rented a truck and picked up 726 snow globes for use at APG for soldiers, veterans and community in that priority," she said.

Mark offered her thanks and well wishes to the Soldiers. "I thank their families for being supportive of their Soldier. I wish them the best holidays--they deserve it," Mark said.

After a few hours of embraces and many tears, the Soldiers filled out their weekend passes and departed the area.



Martha Joiner, mother of Sfc. Thomas Flowers, shows off her patriotic fervor waiting for her son to arrive.



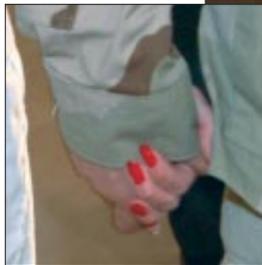
Penny Cacoulidis, a member of Ladies Auxiliary of VFW Post 8126, listens to "The Star Spangled Banner," the tune played by snow globes given to each returning service member. Command Sgt. Maj. Don Brook Satterfield, 115th Military Police Battalion, receives the first one, along with a phone card donated by the VFW post.



Friends, family and loved ones eagerly await the arrival of their homebound Soldiers.



Amanda Chew, 3, dons her father's hat during the welcome home ceremony.



Sgt. David Whipp takes daughter Kaitlyn, 5, into his arms during a tearful reunion with his wife Lisa.



These two Soldiers from the 324th Military Police Battalion found the telephones in the hallway a quieter place to greet their loved ones after their return Dec. 17.



Spc. Michael Rohrer tightly embraces his daughter Hannah, 3, during a tearful reunion at the AA Recreation Center.



Spc. Jody Roles uses the back of Spc. Emily Price to fill out her weekend pass form.