

POST SHORTS

Recycling schedule



The recycling pickup for Wednesday, Dec. 15, is paper. Put items in plastic, glass and metal. Put items in blue bags and place them on the curb.

Harford Gate hours extended

During the upcoming holiday season the operational hours for the Harford Gate (Route 22) in the Aberdeen Area will change slightly. That gate will remain open until 10 p.m. each weeknight. There will be no change to the gate operational hours on weekends or holidays, nor is there any change to gate operations in the Edgewood Area.

As a reminder, the Harford Gate is only for U.S. Government ID card holders. All others must use the Maryland Gate and Visitors Center to enter APG.

APG EA tree lightings scheduled

Col. John T. Wright, deputy installation commander, will host the APG annual holiday tree lighting ceremony 6 p.m., Dec. 12, in front of the EA Chapel, building E-4620.

TSP Catch up registration ends Dec. 11

TSP Catch-up for 2004 will stay in effect until the pay period ending Dec. 11. Employees that desire to make new elections for TSPC for 2005 will be able to create those elections during the pay period Nov. 28 through Dec. 11, to be effective Dec. 12.

The limits for 2005 will increase from \$3,000 to \$4,000 annually. Due to the changing IRS limits, employees must make a new TSPC election each year.

A new chart for deductions, per pay period, will be placed on the ABC-C Web site prior to Nov. 28.

For more information, contact a servicing human resources assistant.

ACA hosts Office Products Expo

The Directorate of Contracting, U. S. Army Contracting Agency will host the second annual Office Products Expo 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dec. 9 at the Aberdeen Proving Ground Recreation Center, building 3326, Erie Street. Refreshments will be

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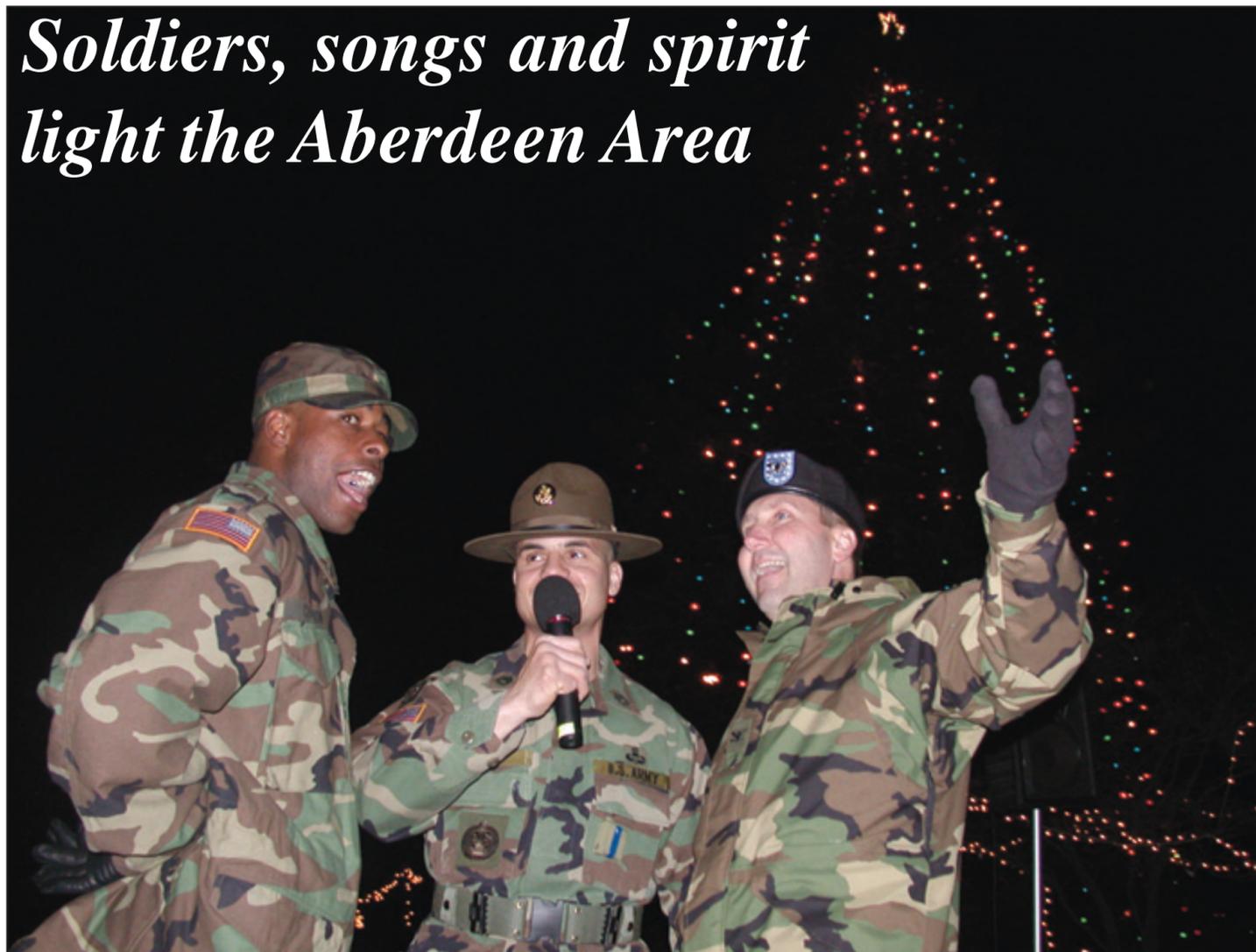
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APG meets blood drive goal

Soldiers, songs and spirit light the Aberdeen Area



APG Garrison commander Col. John T. Wright, right, sings 'Deck the Halls' with 16th Ordnance Battalion Pvt. Kenneth Champion, left, and Drill Sgt. William Bravo at the Aberdeen Area Tree Lighting ceremony Dec. 5.

Story and photos by
Meghan Bowen
APG News

Soldiers and civilians celebrated the holiday season in a Christmas tree lighting ceremony in front of the Aberdeen Area Library Dec. 5.

Aberdeen Proving Ground garrison commander Col. John T. Wright, hosted the ceremony in which an approximately 35-foot evergreen tree was

strung and lit with strands of multicolored lights.

Soldiers from the 16th Ordnance Battalion joined civilians in the celebration, which was filled with caroling, holiday wishes and steaming cups of cider.

An electrician from the Directorate of Installation Operations, Michael Tati, and his daughter Melissa, 12, came

from Rising Sun, to watch the tree lighting.

"This is my fifth year and Melissa's third year coming to see the lights," Tati said.

The Tati's sipped on hot beverages provided by the Garrison Chaplain's Office waiting for the ceremony to begin.

"The apple cider and hot chocolate are new this year,"

Tati said. "It's a nice treat."

Wright addressed guests, and asked the companies of Soldiers if they could hear him.

"Can you hear me on the left?" Wright said.

"Hooah!" each company of Soldiers responded with increasing amounts of volume as Wright spanned the crowd.

"I'd like to welcome and

thank everyone for coming out on this brisk evening," Wright said. "As we celebrate the tree lighting and the holidays, let us remember those across the ocean and everyone in uniform."

Wright thanked the APG Soldiers for their service as some prepare to go home for the holidays during Exodus, in

See TREE, page 13

City of Aberdeen conducts sewer testing on APG

The City of Aberdeen Public Works Department will conduct a test of sanitary sewers using smoke beginning Dec. 6. Smoke testing of sanitary sewers for excessive leakage will continue through the month of December.

The testing will be performed by ARRO Engineering, the city's contractor. The leak tests are completed by forcing low-pressure non-

toxic smoke into the sanitary sewer pipes. The place where the smoke leaves the sanitary sewer system and is visible is a place where storm and other surface waters can enter the sanitary sewers.

The leak testing is part of a continuing effort to provide a safe, economical, efficient, and environmentally sound sanitary sewer system throughout the Aberdeen Area

of Aberdeen Proving Ground.

While most residents will never see or smell the smoke, the City of Aberdeen wants you to have as much information as possible about the testing. A special non-toxic smoke will be used in these leak tests. The smoke is manufactured for this purpose and, therefore, leaves no residuals or stains, is harmless and has no effect on

See TESTING, page 4

Civilians can free up military for other duties

Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

The Army is converting some 5,000 military billets - most staff - to civilian positions in order to free up more soldiers for other needed duties, a Defense Department top civilian personnel official said Oct. 27.

"There are a significant amount of [military] units that don't deploy by definition," Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David S. C. Chu told members of the

Association of the United States Army at their annual meeting. Therefore, he said, DoD is looking "at using civilians in these positions."

That initiative, Chu observed, is part of DoD's efforts to transform and realign its military and civilian workforce to become more efficient and to better meet 21st century challenges like the war on global terrorism.

Chu said the department wants to inject more flexibility in managing its 2.7 million active

See CIVILIANS, page 6

Flu vaccine update

Lt. Col. Kathleen J. Wiltsie
KUSAHC

The national flu vaccine shortage affects the vaccine supply at Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic.

This vaccine shortage means that every effort must be made to balance KUSAHC's primary mission of supporting deploying troops with the responsibility to protect medically high risk beneficiaries.

Not all active duty will receive a flu vaccination this year. As of Nov. 29, KUSAHC is no longer vaccinating permanent party active duty Soldiers.

The first priority is deploying Soldiers.

Second priority includes those eligible health care beneficiaries that are:

- children ages 6 to 23 months old,
- anyone over age 65,

• anyone over the age of 2 who has chronic underlying health conditions such as heart, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease, blood disorder or a weakened immune system,

• children 6 months to 18 years old on chronic aspirin therapy, and

• pregnant women.

The flu vaccine hotline is updated as new information is available. For more information, call 4FLUV or 410-306-3588.

Washing hands often and avoiding those that are sick are two ways to avoid getting sick.

For more information visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Web site, www.cdc.gov/flu

(Editor's note: Author is the deputy commander for Preventive Medicine at Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic.)



Photo by CONRAD JOHNSON
Sgt. Michelle Hufnagel, right, embraces and congratulates her mother, Mrs. Emily Gustafson, who was recognized with a special, organization award from the 22nd Chemical Battalion (TE).

22nd Chemical Battalion holds special awards ceremony

Barry Napp
20th Support Command (CBRNE)

A Company A, 22nd Chemical Battalion (TE) Soldier was presented an Army Commendation Medal with V device and a Purple Heart Medal earned for wounds received for heroic actions or meritorious service while deployed outside the United States involved in military operations against opposing forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sgt. Michelle Hufnagel joined 17 other Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians at the Edgewood Area Conference Center who were recognized for their selfless service. Lt. Col. Franz J.

Amann, commander, 22nd Chemical Battalion (TE) and Col. Walter L. Davis, commander, 20th Support Command (CBRNE) presented the awards.

Amann expressed his gratitude to this "great group of professionals and dedicated team members."

"I feel this is a great privilege to be here with you Soldiers and civilians," he said. "I want to thank you for what you do every day and not just the great work you did in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

"We also are here today to recognize Sgt. Hufnagel for her sacrifice and hard work in her efforts to recover from her

wounds and rejoin our unit," he said.

Other Soldiers recognized in the ceremony were Maj. Bob Stein, Joint Meritorious Service Medal, Staff Sgt. Shawn Daniels, Joint Meritorious Service Medal, Sgt. Joseph Washington, Army Commendation Medal (2004 Battalion NCO of the Year) and Spc. Kyle Guerrero, Army Achievement Medal (2004 Battalion Soldier of the Year).

Thirteen Department of the Army civilians received certificates of achievement for their support to the 22nd Chemical Battalion (TE).

On April 26, Hufnagel became the first casualty from

See AWARDS, page 13

Deployment News

Civilian instructors deploy to War in Iraq

Yvonne Johnson
APG News

The U.S. Army School of Military Packaging Technology, a branch of the U.S. Army Ordnance Center and Schools, has been supporting the war effort in Iraq for more than a year with staff member deployments for critical instruction in the safe shipment of hazardous materials.

Training instructors John Antal, Theresa Logan, Mary Peck, and Robert Pena, returned from their second tour of duty in Iraq and Kuwait in November.

While deployed they spend two to three months training service members preparing to re-deploy to their home stations to Department of Defense standards for the packing and transportation of hazardous materials.

"Hazardous materials are part of a units makeup," Logan said. "Those items have to be prepared to return to a non-tactical environment."

"It's the commander's

responsibility to ensure Soldiers are properly trained in accordance with Department of the Army Pamphlet 38-250, Preparation of Hazardous Materials for Transportation," added Peck.

Their preparation for deployment to Iraq involved a one-week stay at Fort Bliss, Texas, where they received physicals and immunizations and tended to personal affairs such as finance, powers of attorney and shot records.

Their trip included stops in Camp Anaconda near Baghdad and in Kuwait where they conducted 10 classes.

The instructors lived in tents and ate in dining facilities wearing the same desert uniform as the troops they trained.

"A lot of nights were restless in terms of getting sleep as convoys moved in and out of the camp constantly," Logan said.

"The mortar fire from insurgents didn't help either," Antal added, noting more than once shells penetrated their perimeter.



Photo courtesy of SMPT

In an improvised classroom set up in a gym locker room, Soldiers stationed in Iraq study Department of the Army regulations governing the shipment of hazardous materials during training conducted by instructors from the U.S. Army School of Military Packaging Technology.

They said we had to wear Kevlar helmets and flack jackets but we didn't mind, he said.

A Desert Storm veteran who served with an Army Reserve unit, Logan said the surroundings were nothing

like Saudi Arabia.

"Conditions were a lot worse," she said. But soldiers were able to adjust and prepare their shipments to standard.

"That was a good feeling, seeing them so well prepared,"

she said.

Pena said the instructors were warmly thanked before their departure.

"Everyone sensed the importance of our assistance," he said. "We stayed so busy I

lost track of time. But we accomplished what we needed to. I'm glad we went."

Several SMPT instructors have deployed to and from Iraq since the start of the war in 2003.

APG daughter serving proudly in Iraq

Yvonne Johnson
APG News

Despite increasing opposition to the War in Iraq, service members serving there feel they are serving an important and worthwhile cause, according to 1st Lt. Denise Little, with the 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas.

Little, the daughter of Col.

James Little, director of laboratory sciences at the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, and his wife Sheila, a contract senior editor/writer with the U.S. Army Environmental Center, returned home to Aberdeen Proving Ground, the first time since her unit deployed to the war

zone in March.

A graduate of Bel Air High School and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, class of 2002, Little is the executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, 1-21 Field Artillery Regiment. A chemical officer, she has served as one of the few female combat platoon

leaders and hazardous response team members in the theater.

She said what makes this war different from past wars is that support elements are at as high a risk to loss of life and limb as front line troops.

"You don't have to be on the front line to come under fire," Little said, noting that mortars and improvised explosive devices, the favored tools of the insurgents, target all segments of the coalition.

"Technically, women have become combat infantry as well," Little said.

Citing numerous "close calls" in which she and her Soldiers survived attacks on their convoys and on their compound, Little said that the war environment "makes you more thankful for what you have."

"You learn to put your fears aside and maintain for your Soldiers," Little said, adding that her greatest concern is not for herself, but for her subordinates.

"At night, you really thank God for having another day. I'm so thankful nothing has happened to any of my guys. I can take something happening to me but I'd hate to have to live with that."

Although much of her time in Iraq has been spent respond-

ing to IED sightings, escorting convoys and staying on constant watch for insurgent attacks, service in Iraq has its up sides as well, Little said. She cited "the positive things going on in Iraq that you never see on the news," as the main reason for her belief in the war effort.

"We are helping to rebuild villages, renovating schools, repairing irrigation systems and power plants," Little said. "But more importantly, we're providing so many Iraqis with good jobs so they can help themselves."

She and other Soldiers who help coordinate rebuilding efforts on a daily basis, have handed out thousands of school supplies, athletic equipment, toiletries and toys to Iraqi children who would not have them otherwise, she said.

They coordinate their efforts through the village elders and clergy. She viewed her visit home as a self-appointed mission to "spread the good word."

"The children just love you because they know you're the one who gave them their soccer ball," she said. "The insurgents you hear about on the news are not Iraqis," she added. "I'm convinced it's not Iraqis who don't want freedom and the sad part is, the rebels

don't care about attacking innocent women and children."

"We work closely with the Iraqi National Guard which is bearing most of the load of rebuilding, but the corruption within their forces is unfortunate. It's instilling even more fear in the people who are going to be staying here after we're gone," Little said.

Despite the challenges, there is hope for a more stable country, she added. "The experience has made me more aware of the sacrifices made for me," she said.

"I don't really think I've changed all that much. I'm just glad to have the opportunity to serve something I believe in. I feel it's a just cause and I've learned a lot from it."

Little said she plans to remain in the military although many of her comrades are looking forward to exiting.

"I don't blame them. It's been rough," she said. "But in their defense, they serve without hesitation. In every instance they do what I say and more because they know I will be side by side with them, in the thick of it."

Little departed APG for her return to Iraq Nov. 30. Her unit is scheduled to return to Fort Hood in March.



Photo Courtesy of 1st LT DENISE LITTLE

1st Lt. Denise Little smiles down at her comrades from inside a Fox reconnaissance vehicle fitted with a machine gun mount and added turrets for extra protection from Improvised Exploding Devices near Baghdad, Iraq.

APG News

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Pet of the Week



Photo by BLAKE VOSHALL

Energy to spare...

Meet Zena, a female 8-month-old tan, brown and white Shepherd mix who's energetic, friendly and looking for a good home.

To adopt Zena and other animals, visit the Aberdeen Area Veterinary Treatment Facility at 2479 Oakington Street, which is open 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information, call 410-278-3911/4575.

December CAC focuses on holiday safety

Yvonne Johnson
APG News

The Community Action Council meeting for December was held at the Garrison Conference room, building 305, Dec. 1. Col. John T. Wright, Aberdeen Proving Ground Garrison and deputy installation commander led the meeting.

With the holiday season unfolding, topics focused on holiday safety, programs and awareness.

Wright said that as a "holiday gift to the community," the Harford gate at the Aberdeen Area will remain open until 10 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

"This will last through the first full week of January," Wright said. "We want to make sure that people have every opportunity to get used to using the gate again and see how well it works."

Because the additional hours mean "upwards of an additional \$2,000 in payroll for Directorate of Law Enforcement and Security personnel," whether or not the gate remains open during these hours depends on its usage," Wright said. "With low usage it will be difficult to justify the payroll."

Barry Decker, Directorate of Installation Operations, announced that the City of Aberdeen will be conducting smoke testing of sanitary sewers for leakage, Monday thru Friday, during duty hours.

"The smoke is non-toxic. You should not be smelling any smoke in your homes," Decker said.

Housing residents experiencing problems should call the DIO Service Desk at 410-306-1400.

Col. John M. Wempe, commander of Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic, announced that priority tracks for the flu vaccine includes categories 1 and 2, children and senior citizens who are most at risk.

"We cannot open up to any other beneficiaries at this time," Wempe said.

He said the "no show" rate

in the clinics continues to increase with 30 no shows in the last week.

"No shows have to be reported," Wempe said. "If we don't get support from the community in this matter, Kirk won't be there."

Addressing problems with the new HealthNet system, which replaced the Sierra appointment system, Wempe said that complaints should be sent directly to HealthNet.

"They've hired a lot of new people and we have no control over how they are trained," he said. "We are telling them it's not working as well as it needs to be."

Commissary

College scholarship applications are still available through the Commissary Web site. In addition, gift certificates also are available online at www.commissaries.com.

The commissary will be open the Monday before Christmas and the Monday before New Years.

Post closings

Butch Grzanka, garrison operations, and Bert Scott, DIO director, briefed the council on the post closing policies and procedures during bad weather. Grzanka said the only person who can close the installation is the installation commander.

"This is not a light decision," Grzanka said. "The post is rarely closed due to bad weather."

What usually happens when bad weather is forecast is, the parties involved come together to consult with local police agencies about road conditions, he said.

"Based on that information, we give our recommendations to the installation commander," Grzanka said.

Also taken into account are DIO capabilities to clear roadways, he added.

Information regarding the installation's status is put out to the local media outlets including APG's channel 21.

"Listen and watch carefully to TV and radio reports,"

Grzanka said, noting that listeners should look for specific mentions of APG.

"The Baltimore Federal Executive Board governs only government agencies in Baltimore," he said, "not APG employees."

Information will be posted by 6 a.m. Although some arrive sooner, planning is based on the majority.

Scott noted that for those who commute the challenge is getting to the post as most roadways and parking lots are cleared before their arrival.

"We have a host of folks involved in putting down salt and clearing roads from the time the first snowflake falls," Scott said.

He said the main thoroughfares and parking lots are a priority, then the housing areas.

"Our priority is to make this post operational as quickly as possible, before, during and after the storm," Scott said.

Decker added that the snow removal information number, 410-278-SNOW, can also be called for other emergency closure information.

"It doesn't have to be about snow," he said, adding that residents should take time to remove snow from around fire hydrants when shoveling.

"Precious moments can be lost trying to locate a hydrant during a fire," Decker said.

In addition, housing residents were encouraged to remove their cars from the roadways so snowplows can clear the roads, and warned not to attempt to place holiday decorations on rooftops or to remove snow from them.

"Basically, people should stay off their roofs," Scott said. "We are better equipped to deal with them."

DLES

Robert Krauer, APG provost marshal, said that with the holiday party season approaching, DLES is stressing driving safety.

"We cannot stress enough the importance of using a designated driver," Krauer said. "Our police department will be

doing the same as every other police department, stringently enforcing the DUI laws."

Krauer introduced the new Community Officer, Michael Farlow.

"He will be operating out of Patriot Village and he has lots of community-focused plans for the future," Krauer said.

Farlow said that some of those plans include a Bicycle Rodeo, National Night Out, and Scared Straight activities for children and parents.

"We basically plan to involve the community and become more visible," Farlow said.

Post Exchange

The Post Exchange will hold AIT Night, 6 to 9 p.m., Dec. 9.

The Midnight Madness sale will be held Dec. 16.

Safety

The Installation Housing and Safety offices asked that all remember to "think safety" during the holidays.

"A lot can be avoided if we take a few minutes to consider our actions," said Susie Ashby, DIO safety officer.

Retiree update

Retired Col. Charles Shadle said the Retiree Appreciation Day was a huge success and thanked the *APG News* for its coverage. Also, he announced that a readjustment to the Survivor Benefit program has been approved and will take effect October 2005.

"There is no increase involved in the higher coverage," Shadle said.

Other actions

The program to Sponsor a Soldier for the holidays is still pending.

Changes to the trash removal schedule can be found in the *APG News*.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation activities will have different operating hours during the holidays. Check the *page 8 of this issue* for dates and times.

The date for the next CAC will be announced in the *APG News*.

Holiday safety includes family pets

<http://www.okpetgazette.com/holiday-safety.html>

During this hectic time of year, maintaining a normal schedule for pets with regular mealtimes, walks, litter box cleanup, exercise and playtime should be on a pet owner's list.

Bad habits, caused by stressful experiences during the holidays can persist long after decorations are packed away. It's easier for pet owners, and safer for their animal companions, to ban possible dangers from the home rather than try to keep curious pets away from decorations, flowers and plants - and then worry whenever not home. Numerous alternatives - simple, inexpensive or homemade - can substitute for dangerous decorations, like tinsel (can cause serious abdominal damage), breakable glass ornaments (can cut paws and mouths) and poisonous plants.

Plan for safety. A safe holiday means less stress and more fun for people and pets alike.

Keep pets away from holly, mistletoe, pine needles, lilies, amaryllis, poinsettia and boxwood - ingesting these can cause mild to severe gastrointestinal upset or even death. Instead, decorate with animal-safe or artificial substitutes. If a pet owner suspects their pet has ingested any potentially poisonous substance, call the veterinarian and the ASPCA's National Animal Poison Control Center emergency hotline, 1-888-4-ANI-HELP (charged to pet owner's credit card) or 900-680-0000. (See <http://www.napcc.aspc.org/>.)

Candles and pets just don't mix. A careless tail or overeager leap can mean serious burns or a tragic fire. Simmering potpourri can tip over, causing burns and scalds. Be vigilant around electrical wiring, or render it totally inaccessible by running it through PVC pipe or cord-organizer tubing. Keep batteries, which contain corrosives

and toxic materials, away from pets. Tiny "button" batteries are highly toxic if ingested.

Cats and puppies adore Christmas trees - perfect for climbing or scratching. They include a menagerie of dangly baubles and warm sparkly lights, enticing outdoor scents, and twisty cords draped across the floor.

Be sure the Christmas tree is non-tippable. A heavy tree stand helps, but it's also wise to wire the tree firmly to the ceiling. Twist a length of wire around the trunk near the top, and pull the wire through a hook or eyebolt firmly attached to the ceiling.

When choosing a tree, consider Blue Spruce; its dense prickly needles discourage

climbing.

Reserve lower branches for pet-safe ornaments: crocheted snowflakes, cloth or other soft unbreakables.

Loop pet-safe decorations loosely around branches with ribbon loops so the pet can safely bat them off. Avoid metal hooks. Tie ornaments intended to remain on the tree firmly to high branches with string or ribbon. Hang fragile or valuable ornaments high, and position the tree so pets can't use a nearby piece of furniture as a launching pad into the upper branches. Keep water in the tree stand completely inaccessible to animals. Even without added preservatives, it's toxic.

Theobromine and caffeine

in chocolate are toxic to cats - and even more so to dogs. The darker the chocolate, the more dangerous. Cats, who lack a "sweet tooth," are less likely to indulge, but dogs often gobble a potentially lethal dose. Keep all candy, especially chocolate, in safe containers like cookie tins with tight-fitting lids, not open bowls.

Besides chocolate, keep pets away from yeast dough and cookie dough, alcoholic beverages, onions and onion powder, rhubarb and all garbage. If serving turkey, keep the bird out of the pet's reach. Many a turkey defrosting overnight in a sink or on a countertop has proven too tempting for a curious pet,

See PETS, page 14

CMA director receives two honors

Meghan Bowen
APG News

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency director at Aberdeen Proving Ground and Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program manager received two awards for his national and worldwide efforts with stored chemical weapons disposal.

Michael Parker was presented with the Department of Defense Civilian Service Award during a Nov. 19 ceremony held at the Pentagon. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld presented Parker with the department's highest civilian service award, which recognizes career employees at all levels for their 'exceptional' achievement, and honors performance characterized by extraordinary, notable or prestigious contributions that impact the department as a whole.

Parker was also honored by the Sierra Club, a national environmental organization, at their annual awards banquet in San Francisco on Sept. 11, where he was presented with the Distinguished Achievement Award for his work.

"Parker has overseen the development and demonstration of three complex-treatment systems responsible for destroying the nation's stored chemical weapons stockpile, proving conclusively that there are viable and economically attractive alternatives to incineration for dealing with hazardous wastes of all kinds," said Larry Fahn, Sierra Club president.

The Sierra Club and other community-based organizations worked with Congress for legislation that led to the establishment of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Program that Parker developed the treatment systems for.

Parker explained that the three complex-treatment systems

for chemical disposal were selected from 13 initial technology programs that were screened and then formally assessed.

"Two of the technologies are based on the chemical neutralization of the primary chemical agents and explosives [in the weapons] followed by secondary treatment of the neutralized agent and explosives and the munitions metal parts," Parker said.

Parker explained the process further.

"The biological treatment, or super critical water oxidation, are the secondary treatment technologies. The third technology uses electrolytic reduction of the chemical agent and explosives followed by thermal treatment of the solid materials," Parker said.

The primary and secondary treatment technologies are non-incineration based approaches, which reduces chemical elements from being released into the air, according to Parker.

These two honors add to a collection of awards that Parker has received for his work, which include the Distinguished Presidential Rank award, the most prestigious award given to career government senior executives, and the Decoration for Exceptional Service, the Army's highest civilian honor.



Michael Parker

USAEC commander recognizes achievements

Neal Snyder

U.S. Army Environmental Center

The achievements of U.S. Army Environmental Center staff members were honored Nov. 23 at the USAEC Town Hall meeting on the Edgewood area of Aberdeen Proving Ground.

"This organization is full of remarkable people working to help the Army fulfill its environmental mission," said Col. Tony R. Francis, USAEC commander. "When I look at the depth and breadth of awards we're giving away today, I feel proud and a little humbled to be a part of it."

Janmichael S. Graine of the Natural Resources Branch received a Bronze Star for his service during combat operations as an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel with the 455th Chemical Brigade in Iraq from May 2003 through March 2004. The award was signed by Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz, then deputy commander of Combined Joint Task Force 7 and now commander of Multinational Corps Iraq.

Robert A. Snyder, acting chief of the Oversight, North branch of the Cleanup Division, received the Commander's Award for

Civilian Service signed by Maj. Gen. Larry J. Lust, assistant chief of staff for installation management, for his work in preparing a response to a Defense Department environmental liabilities audit.

Dominique K. Edwards, acting chief of the Cleanup Division, received the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service signed by the ACSIM for her role in producing a corrective action plan for the environmental liabilities audit report.

Russell S. Proctor, of the Logistics Branch, received the Achievement Medal for

Civilian Service for his work as supply technician for the 61st Ordnance Brigade S4 at the U.S. Army Ordnance Mechanical Maintenance School from July 2003 through February 2004.

Kent R. Gonsler, chief of the Impact Area Groundwater Study Program at Camp Edwards, Mass., received a certificate of commendation for leading the transition of the program from investigation to cleanup of contamination, from July 2003 through October 2004.

Karen Heckelman, of the

See AEC, page 13

Alarm sounds during agent draining operations at ABCDF

CMA

An alarm sounded at the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility located in the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground as an operator was performing routine mustard agent draining operations Dec. 3.

At no time did any agent vapor leave the building's engineering controls. At no time was there a threat to the workers, community or environment.

The operator was attempting to attach a hose to an agent container located inside a sealed enclosure when his outermost glove was torn, exposing the second of three protective layers of gloves to agent. In accordance with established procedures, he inspected his inner gloves for damage, did not see any tears, and took the precaution of changing out the gloves. After resuming normal operations, an alarm sounded indicating the presence of a trace amount of agent.

The operator and his partner immediately put on their protective masks and proceeded to a nearby decontamination shower. Technicians then monitored and cleared both operators using a portable monitor.

As a precaution, the operators were sent to the ABCDF medical clinic for observation where they were soon cleared.

Workers operating in the same area of the building temporarily evacuated until the drain station returned to normal reading levels in less than 15 minutes. Drain operations continued later that evening.

"The precautions built into the draining procedure, having operators wear three gloves, worked as it was designed. One glove tore, and the operator remained protected from agent exposure," said ABCDF Commander Lt. Col. Gerald Gladney. "The operator reacted as he was trained, and we will brief all our other operators on this incident as an example of the right way to stay protected," he added.

Since beginning disposal operations in April 2003, workers at the ABCDF have safely neutralized more than 60 percent of the Aberdeen mustard agent stockpile. More information about storage and disposal operations at ABCDF is available at the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency's Web site, <http://www.cma.army.mil>.

Army drains, decontaminates leaking container

CMA

The Army safely transported a ton container Nov. 6 and 7 to the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility that had leaked mustard vapor this past summer and fall. The container was successfully drained and decontaminated.

After the draining was completed and the decontaminated container was safely placed back into storage, parts from a kit used to seal the container's plugs caused a mustard agent sensor to alarm in an area of the facility under engineering controls. ABCDF operators noticed an odor when they removed their protective masks after enclosing the kit parts in a doubled bag. The operators left the room and an alarm sounded immediately after they left. At no time did any agent vapor leave the building. The workers were monitored, and as a precautionary measure, were sent to ABCDF's medical clinic for evaluation where they were cleared and returned to work.

This operation concluded a several-month-long probe and designed wait that began June 23, 2004, when an agent sensor inside a storage structure detected a trace amount of agent vapor. The building was immediately sealed and a chemical agent filter was attached to its ventilation system to prevent any potential release of vapor to the outside.

The Army successfully isolated the container and sealed the leak by tightening the container's valve. However, in mid-August, the container began leaking again. The building's filtration system was turned back on to contain any traces of agent vapor.

After the mid-August event, site safety officials determined it best to keep the leaking container under engineering controls within the storage structure until workers could safely move it with the least amount of risk.

As the container was located in the rear of the storage building and was surrounded by numerous other containers, the low risk course of action was to wait until processing operations eventually emptied out the surrounding containers. "This was a safe and prudent method to deal with the leaking container," said Mary Jo Civis, Edgewood Chemical Activity civilian executive. "It minimized the risk of moving surrounding containers to our workers, the community, and the environment."

"The safe transport from storage and draining of the leaking container is a real success story," according to ABCDF Site Project Manager Joseph Lovrich. "Personnel from ECA and ABCDF worked together to develop a transport plan to safely move the leaking container from its specially engineered, sealed storage building to ABCDF for safe and rapid draining and decontamination. The transport and processing was accomplished safely, and workers at ABCDF responded to the alarm exactly as they have been trained," he added.

See DRAINS, page 14

Testing

From front page

plants and animals. The smoke may have a distinctive, but not unpleasant odor.

Leak testing smoke may enter your quarters if:

- Vents connected to your building's sewer pipe are inadequate, defective, or improperly installed.

- Traps under sinks, tubs, basins, showers and other drains are dry, defective, improperly installed or missing.

- Pipe, connections and seals of the wastewater drain system in, under and around your building are damaged, defective, have plugs missing, or are improperly installed.

If a trace of the smoke enters any quarters or building or if there is evidence of smoke in the quarters during the smoke testing process, please report it immediately to the DIO help desk at 410-306-1400.

For more information, call Dennis Overbay at 410-652-0862 or Buzz Soltis at 410-652-8154.

Veterans' voices

Seeking improvement for veterans

Military.com

The Veterans Improvement Act of 2004 would improve and update several Veterans Administration education and housing programs, including increasing the maximum amount of a housing loan guarantee to \$83,425 from \$60,000. This change in guarantee will increase no-down payment VA guaranteed home loan limits from \$240,000 to \$333,700. Under the current formula, VA guarantees 25 percent of the available loan up to the guarantee limit.

Veterans are encouraged to read about the Veterans Improvement Act, Bill #S. 2486, and to let their representatives know how they feel.

The Veterans Improvement Act of 2004 was introduced June 1.

The act:

- Increases the voluntary contribution amount that active duty members of the armed forces may make to

receive increased monthly educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill.

- Authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program that allows veterans to extend their eligibility period for using MGIB education benefits to obtain specified instruction or training.

- Excludes veterans' education benefits from the determination of eligibility for, or the amount of, federal education grants and loans (except for campus-based student financial assistance that exceeds a veteran's cost of attendance when combined with such benefits).

- Requires the secretary to collect required contributions from reservists before they use MGIB educational assistance (currently, required at the beginning of active duty period).

- Increases the maximum housing loan guarantee amount for which veterans are

eligible.

- Gives the secretary permanent authority to guarantee adjustable rate mortgages, ARMs, and hybrid ARMs, and to modify interest rates applicable to hybrid ARMs.

- Terminates the collection of housing loan fees from veterans rated eligible for compensation at pre-discharge disability examinations.

- Extends administrative and judicial remedies for violations of veterans' preference requirements to all veterans (currently, limited to preference eligible veterans).

- Prohibits the collection of co-payments from veterans receiving hospice care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

- Extends certain authorities relating to benefits for veterans that are set to expire.

- Modifies the definition of minority group member for purposes of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans.

Special Recruiter Assistance Program enables Soldiers to share deployment experiences

Julia Bobick

U.S. Army Recruiting Command G5

The Army has a great opportunity for Soldiers who want to share their Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom deployment experiences with friends, family and community members in their hometown, as well as to help recruit the next generation of heroes.

Through the Special Recruiter Assistance Program (SRAP), eligible Soldiers can serve on temporary duty up to 14 days at the recruiting station nearest their hometown. During that time, Soldiers will work for the recruiting station by assisting with recruiting activities, speaking at college and community events, and participating in interviews with local media.

Sgt. Kevin Turnblom of the 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Bliss

applied for the program so he could return home to his alma mater, Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, to share firsthand his deployment experiences in Kuwait and Iraq.

"It's a great opportunity. ... I talk [to students] about my experiences; they are interested in what I have to say," said Spc. Andrew Petrucelli, an infantry Soldier from Fort Bragg, N.C., who last month assisted recruiters in the Newton, N.Y., area.

During SRAP activities in and around her hometown of Green Cove Springs, Fla., Spc. Lauren Snell recalled her experiences in Baghdad as both perilous and gratifying.

"When I saw the differences in the way people were living it made me proud to be an American and that I was doing something to

See RECRUITER, page 12

Ceremonies to mark Battle of the Bulge anniversary

www.vbob.org

A wreath laying ceremony to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, will be held 11 a.m., Dec. 16, at the Tomb of

the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery, Va.

The 60th Commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge will be held Dec. 10 to 20 in Belgium and Luxembourg.

For more information, contact Nancy Monson, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Headquarters, P.O. Box 11129, Arlington VA 22210 or see the current Bulge Bugle.

DOL backs vet hire program

www.militarystars.com

The Department of Labor and the President's National Hire Veterans Committee has launched a "Hire Vets First" campaign.

This campaign strives to heighten employer awareness about the employability of veterans.

MilitaryStars is currently working with hundreds of employers who understand the value of military experience and want to hire the best candidates upon their departure from the military.

MilitaryStars is committed to helping veterans keep their career on track by presenting

exceptional career opportunities that best complement their background, talents and goals. The goal is to assist veterans in growing and developing a long-term career with a reputable and respected company.

Veterans requiring assistance in career transition should visit Web site <http://www.militarystars.com>.

Free services offered to veteran job seekers include several military career fairs each year that feature some of the top "military friendly" employers in the country, as well as job listings from hundreds of employers on the MilitaryStars Web site.

Paralyzed Veterans of America salute opening of Baltimore Center

During the opening of the Department of Veterans Affairs Multiple Sclerosis Center for Excellence in Baltimore, the Paralyzed Veterans of America was recognized for its expertise in helping to organize one of the nation's premier resource centers for information on treating the disease.

PVA officials, including members of the PVA Delaware/Maryland Chapter, joined with VA representatives, other veterans groups, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, members of Congress and clinicians in a ribbon-cutting ceremony unveiling a coalescence of a substantial amount of research and clinical information that will be shared throughout the vast VA healthcare system.

"The opening of this center represents a collaboration of people and their ideas, coming together over a period of many years," said John Bollinger, PVA deputy executive director. "Today I pledge PVA's continued involvement

in working toward the fulfillment of the mission of the Baltimore VA MS Center for Excellence."

With several thousand PVA members diagnosed with multiple sclerosis-and many more veterans under treatment in the VA healthcare system-a consensus emerged that concentrating VA's MS information expertise in two resources centers (Baltimore and Seattle/Portland) would deliver the best care to patients throughout the system.

Founded in 1946, Paralyzed Veterans of America is the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of individuals with spinal cord injury or disease. PVA is a dynamic, broad-based organization with more than 20,000 members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

To learn more about PVA, visit Web site, www.pva.org.

MOVIES

ADMISSION: ADULTS \$3.50, CHILDREN \$1.75
Building 3245 Aberdeen Boulevard
To verify listing, call 410-272-7520.

THE INCREDIBLES

Friday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

Animated

A dysfunctional family of famous superheroes, led by the retired and overweight Mr. Incredible, is placed in a suburb by the Witness Protection Program in order to protect them from their arch nemesis. But their peaceful existence is hardly that, with family disagreements sprouting up even during fights with the bad guys. And when the world is threatened, Mr. Incredible must go back to work to save the planet. (Rated PG)

RAY (FREE ADMISSION)

Saturday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.

Starring: Jamie Foxx, Kerry Washington

Ray Charles went blind at the age of seven. With the staunch support of his determined single mother, he developed the fierce resolve, wit and incredible talent that would eventually enable him to overcome not only Jim Crow racism and the cruel prejudices against the blind, but also discover his own sound

which revolutionized American popular music. Nonetheless, as Charles' unprecedented fame grew, so did his weakness for drugs and women, until they threatened to strip away the very things he held most dear. (Rated PG-13)

ALFIE

Saturday, Dec. 11, 9 p.m.

Starring: Jude Law, Marisa Tomei

Jude Law stars in this trenchant dramatic-comedy, a remake of the 1966 British counterculture classic that launched the career of Michael Caine. This version is set in New York City and is pumped up with giddy, cleverly experimental editing. The story has Alfie (Law), a Don Juan-esque limo driver, speaking directly to the camera as he seduces the lovely ladies of the city, womanizing them from one bed to the next. While his actions arise more from nonchalance than malice, Alfie nonetheless faces a moral dilemma when considering that he's impregnated one of his latest girlfriends. (Rated R)

AFTB celebrates 10th birthday

ACS

December 16 is the 10th Birthday of the Army Family Team Building Program.

The APG AFTB will celebrate the occasion with a cake cutting by Garrison Commander Col. John T. Wright at the Post Exchange 1 p.m., Dec. 16. An AFTB information table will be available from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The entire APG community is invited.

The theme for the 10th Birthday Celebration is "A Decade of Enriching Army Families."

Since its beginning in 1994, AFTB has taught families and Soldiers about the resources and skills that will aid them in becoming self-sufficient.

Army wide, AFTB has taught over 75,000 students in fiscal year 2004. During the last 10 years, AFTB has impacted thousands of family members, civilians and Soldiers.

Army Family Team Building, an Army Community Service program, is a volunteer led program that offers classes about military life, resources and leadership skills. Classes are taught in three levels. They are often taught as a whole level, but can also be taught individually for an FRG, unit or volunteer organization. Classes are also offered online at www.army-familyteambuilding.org. Online classes include Level One and Two; in English or Spanish, and Level Three in English.

Level One is considered to be "Army Life 101," consisting of eight classes (11 classroom hours) that introduce the student to the basics of military life, including the chain of command, acronyms and expectations.

Level Two focuses on teaching life skills. The focus of Level Two is students who are interested in gaining life skills and in becoming community leaders. The level consists of 19 classes (20 classroom hours) including Stress Management and Group Dynamics.

Level Three is developed for the person interested in developing leadership skills. It consists of 14 classes (18 classroom hours) including

Leadership Skills and Group Conflict Management.

Volunteer instructors are trained with 20 hours of classroom instruction. The classes are taught by "Master Trainers," who have attended a Department of the Army sponsored 40-hour training.

The APG AFTB Program is actively seeking volunteers and instructors for the program. In January, the program will be offering an Instructor Training Course. In February, an evening Level One will be offered.

For more information, call Sarah Staats, ACS, 410-278-2464 or e-mail Sarah.Staats@us.army.mil.

Community Notes

SATURDAY

DECEMBER 11

PHOTO WITH SANTA

Children can have their photo taken with Santa 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. inside Oshkosh B'Gosh at the Perryville Outlets. A \$5 donation will help benefit the Perryville Lions Club.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

The Perryville Outlets Mall will host Breakfast with Santa, 9 a.m. Cost is \$5 per person and includes breakfast, a gift bag for each child and a visit by Santa.

For more information or to make reservations, call the mall office at 410-378-9399.

SUNDAY

DECEMBER 12

BASKET BINGO

American Legion Post 194, 336 E. Main St., Rising Sun, is sponsoring a basket bingo.

Games start at 3 p.m. Cost is \$10 for 20 games. For more information, call 410-658-3915, or e-mail basketbingors@aol.com. Proceeds benefit Boy Scout Troop 28.

BASKET BINGO

Basket Bingo to benefit the North East VFW Post 6027 will be held at the VFW Post

6027, Route 272, Turkey Point Road, North East. Doors open 2 p.m., bingo starts at 3 p.m.

Tickets cost \$10 for all paper cards; extra packs cost \$5 each. Food, beverages, baked goods, door prizes and raffles will be available. No smoking will be allowed.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call Anne Gibson, 410-378-3338; Jean Patterson, 410-398-7457; Linda French, 410-287-0041 or call VFW Post 6027, 410-287-7817.

DECOY MUSEUM CANDLELIGHT TOUR

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, located on 215 Giles Street, will hold a free Museum Candlelight Tour and Carver Celebration, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Carvers and wildlife artists will display and sell their works. There will be a one-day only 25 percent off sale of gift shop items for museum members.

The Decoy Museum is a stop on the 32nd annual Candlelight Tour of historic Havre de Grace, 4 to 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the Decoy Museum. The Museum is open daily, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, call

410-939-3739.

THURSDAY

DECEMBER 16

EXODUS SUPER SUPPER SPECIALTY MEAL

The Exodus Super Supper Specialty Meal will be held in the Aberdeen Area dining facilities, buildings 4503 and 4219 and the Edgewood Area dining facility, building E-4225, for dinner, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

During this event military personnel, family members, Department of Defense civilians, retirees and guests are invited to dine.

The standard meal rate of \$3.30 applies to any officer, enlisted member, and family member of sergeant or above, DoD civilian, retiree and their guests. The discount meal rate of \$2.85 applies to spouses and other family members of enlisted personnel in ranks private through specialist/ corporal.

The Exodus Super Supper Specialty Meal Menu includes hearty chicken and rice soup, grilled New York strip steaks with fried onions and mushrooms, baked fish almonidine, southern fried chicken, pizza and burger bar, fluffy mashed potatoes, seasoned rice, brown gravy, broccoli with cheese sauce, Boston baked corn, hot dinner rolls, assorted salad bar, carrot and raisin salad, jell-o

fruit salad, assorted desserts, soft serve yogurt with assorted toppings, assorted condiments and beverages.

Note: Menu is subject to change without prior notification.

For more information, call Edward Parylo or Ernest Green at 410-306-1393/1398.

IRONBIRDS ANNUAL TOY DRIVE

The Aberdeen IronBirds will hold their second annual Toy Drive at Ripken Stadium, 6 to 9 p.m. in conjunction with the Baltimore Sun. The toy drive will benefit Toys for Tots and the Aegis Empty Stocking Fund. Special guests include Cal Ripken Jr., Bill Ripken and Santa Claus.

Bring a new, unopened toy to Ripken Stadium for the event. Families are encouraged to attend together and bring a camera, as all participating children will have the opportunity to get their picture taken with IronBirds' owners Cal Ripken Jr., Bill Ripken and Santa Claus.

Due to the nature of the event, people are asked to refrain from autograph requests.

For more information, call Jay Moskowitz at 410-297-9292 ext. 307 or e-mail jmoskowitz@ironbirdsbaseball.com.

Civilians

From front page

and reserve-component service members, 650,000 civilian workers and 96,000 nonappropriated-fund employees.

Regarding military force structure, "a significant degree of rebalancing is necessary," Chu said. For example, he pointed to a current project that draws down outmoded active-duty field-artillery units and replaces them with high-demand military police.

The current voluntary military system "is splendid," Chu said, noting, "we are not going to have a draft."

However, Chu noted, DoD is looking into "the short tenure" of officers in their posts. Current two-year postings are "far too fast," he said, and don't give officers enough time to effect meaningful changes.

Another recently adopted initiative involves calling up reservists to active duty for training before they're mobilized, Chu said. For example, he pointed to the recruitment of 200 reservists for training in

Arabic. Forty of those linguists, he noted, were recently deployed to Iraq.

And, he said, DoD still is evaluating if 300,000 military slots can be converted to civilian positions.

Changes are also in store for the department's civilians, Chu observed, noting Congress last year approved DoD's proposal to overhaul its personnel system as part of the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act.

The adoption of the National Security Personnel System now being crafted, Chu said, will create a "more responsive and flexible" DoD civilian workforce.

The NSPS, he pointed out, would "make the civilian component of our personnel system equally effective with the military" force.

NSPS, according to the system's Web site, gives DoD greater authority over hiring, rewarding and firing civilian employees. The new system does away with the current 150 occupational/pay scales in favor of four broad pay bands. Under NSPS, according to the Web site, employees are rewarded for performance instead of longevity.

NSPS regulations are being written now, Chu said, noting parts of the new system will be brought on line in mid-2005, with total NSPS implementation envisioned in the 2007-2008 timeframe.

The NSPS and other personnel initiatives - like the recent Air Force merger of the management of its senior military officers and senior executive service civilians - will expand DoD civilians' role in departmental affairs, Chu said, while fostering the "one force" concept.

POST SHORTS

served.

Attendees will have an opportunity to become acquainted with the various vendors who have agreements under the mandatory Blanket Purchase Agreement used to purchase office supplies. A representative from the Defense Logistics Agency will demonstrate the use of DoD EMALL.

This event will emphasize the Javits-Wagner O'Day Program, which is a unique Federal procurement program that generates employment and training opportunities for people who are blind and those who have other severe disabilities. The JWOD Program is a mandatory source of supply.

Everyone is invited to attend; especially those involved in the acquisition process, i.e. requestors, government purchase cardholders, billing officials.

For more information, call Dennis Bolen, ACA, DSN 298-0849 or e-mail him at debolen@sbccom.apgea.army.mil.

Ski resort offers free lifts to military

Timberline Four Seasons Resort would like to express its gratitude to the men and women of the U.S. military, and in appreciation has designated Dec. 10, 11 and 12 as Military Appreciation Days. All military personnel with a valid military ID will be entitled to a free lift pass. Immediate family members will be given a 20 percent discounted lift ticket.

Atop the Alleghenies, near Davis, W.Va., Timberline is a seasonal paradise with a summit of 4,268 feet and a view of the valley of Canaan.

One week left to change health benefits

The Federal Employees Health Benefits Open Season ends in one week. The last day to make changes is Dec. 13. All changes become effective on Jan. 9.

For more information, call Teri Wright, 410-278-4331.

Garrison work force briefing scheduled

Col. John T. Wright will address the garrison work force on 1:30 p.m., Dec. 13, at the Post Theater and 1:30 p.m., Dec. 14, at the EA Chapel, building E-4620. Supervisors should make allowances for anyone who wishes to attend.

Thrift Shop bag sale

The Thrift Shop will hold a \$2 bag sale through Dec 16.

The Thrift Shop will be closed Dec. 17 through Jan. 5.

For more information, call 410-272-8572.

Winter coat drive underway

A winter coat drive will be held through Dec. 17. Winter is fast approaching and many are in need of a coat or jacket.

Help someone in need keep the chill off during the upcoming winter months. Many people have one or two articles in their closets that have not been worn in a year or more.

Allow someone in need to use these items.

Donate coats and other clothes and food items to those in need. Drop off points include the Post Chapel, PX and the Commissary.

For more information, call Spc. James Hyde at 410-278-4333 or Staff Sgt. Brian Adams at 410-278-3000.

Blue Cross visit scheduled

The APG Civilian Personnel Advisory Center has made arrangements for a claim representative of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan to visit Aberdeen Proving Ground 9 to 11:30 a.m., Dec. 14 in building 305, room 236 to discuss claim problems and plan coverage. The representative will be available in the Edgewood Area 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in building E-4811 (Seminar Area of Conference Center). No appointment is necessary.

For more information, call Teri Wright, CPAC, 410-278-4331.

Holiday closures

Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic will be closed in observance of the federal holidays Dec. 24 and 31.

There will be no Saturday Walk-in Clinic on Dec. 25 or Jan. 1.

Training holidays will be observed on Dec. 27 and Jan. 3, with minimal staffing.

Any TRICARE issues can be addressed by calling 1-877-874-2273.

TRICARE conducts briefings

Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic will hold TRICARE briefings in their Readiness and Training Conference Room, building 2501, 8 a.m. and noon, Dec. 13 and 8 a.m. and noon, Dec. 22.

The briefings will be conducted by HealthNet Federal

Services

AFTB celebrates 10th year

Army Family Team Building will celebrate its 10th birthday, 1 p.m., Dec. 16. Sarah Staats, the new coordinator, will host a cake cutting with Col. John T. Wright, deputy installation commander. Everyone is invited. For more information, call Army Community Service, 410-278-7474.

Social Hour at Top of the Bay

Table tennis, darts and other activities are available at the Friday socials, 4 to 8 p.m., at Top of the Bay every Friday.

Look for future competitions with prizes to include tickets to local events and bus trips. Free snacks, music and more are available.

For more information, call MWR Registration.

Military Christian Center plans seven trips for December

The Military Christian Center has sightseeing and shopping trips scheduled for December. Pickup times and locations include:

Dec. 11, 1:30 p.m. pickup, White Marsh Shopping Mall.

Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. pickup, Philadelphia (Independence Hall, Liberty Bell, Shopping Mall).

Dec. 18, 9 a.m. pickup, Baltimore Inner Harbor (Civil War flagship, submarine, National Aquarium, shopping mall and more).

Dec. 19, 9 a.m. pickup, Rockvale Shopping Outlet.

Dec. 23, 7 p.m. pickup, Christmas Party - Noel Company.

All trips are free, with a donation of \$2.

The Military Christian Center is located at 16 N. Philadelphia Blvd., Aberdeen, and is open Friday through Sunday.

Free home home-cooked meals and dorm facilities are available.

When a call is received, a member of the staff will pick up. The center is a practical place to hang out and relax for the weekend.

For more information, call 410-272-1144 after 8 p.m. Friday evening, or e-mail

Winningapg@aol.com.

Holiday refuse removal schedule

For the week of Christmas, Tuesday's Dec. 21 refuse removals are changed to Monday, Dec. 20; Thursday's Dec. 23 removals are moved to Tuesday, Dec. 21; and Friday's Dec. 24 removals are moved to Thursday, Dec. 23.

For the week of New Year's, Tuesday's Dec. 28 removals are moved to Monday, Dec. 27, Thursday's Dec. 30 removals are moved to Tuesday, Dec. 28, and Friday's Dec. 31 removals are moved to Thursday, Dec. 30.

There will be no trash pickup on Dec. 24 or Dec. 31.

The only scheduled pickup for Christmas trees is Monday, Jan. 10.

Army seeks warrant officer candidates

The U.S. Army is looking for highly motivated Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen to fill its warrant officer ranks.

Positions are open to qualified applicants in all 45 specialties. Applicants with less than 12 years of active federal service are encouraged to apply.

For more information and all forms/documents required, visit www.usarec.army.mil/warrant, or call DSN 536-0328/0466/0271/1860/0458/0484 or commercial 502-626-1860.

Army Suggestion Program On AKO

Aberdeen Proving Ground is transitioning to the new Army-wide suggestion program located on AKO. To access, visit https://armysuggestions.army.mil/services/asp/asp_home.cfm.

There is also a link from www.apg.army.mil.

Users will need their AKO user name and password to access this site.

For more information, contact Marjorie Sexton, 410-278-0944, or e-mail marjorie.sexton1@us.army.



Morale, Welfare & Recreation

Activities

Operating hours

The MWR Registration, Tickets and Leisure Travel Center's operating hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday thru Friday, and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., the first and third Friday of every month.

If this happens to fall on a training holiday, then, on the Thursday prior, the office will be open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information, call 410-278-4011/4907.

MWR Registration specials

MWR Registration and Leisure Travel Center has some gift suggestions for the holidays.

2004 White House Ornaments are available for \$15.

2005 Baltimore Entertainment Books are available for \$30. Supplies are limited.

Carnival Cruise Gift Certificates are on sale for a limited time starting at \$450 for two guests. All sales end Dec. 31.

For more information, call MWR Registration and Leisure Travel Center, 410-278-4011/4907.

Paint your own

Edgewood Area Arts and Crafts now has a "Paint Your Own Ceramic Studio."

The ceramic studio is open to all APG civilians, active duty military, contractors and reservists and their dependents. No previous artist skills are required. There is a wide assortment of gift and holiday items to choose from.

Hours of operation are 1 to 9 p.m., Thursday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday.

Arts and Crafts is located in building E-4440, next to the Military Police Station.

For more information, call 410-436-2153.

Limited supply of Entertainment Books

A limited supply of Entertainment Books are available at MWR Registration for \$30.

The book offers discounts and coupons on dining, movies, hotels, car rentals and much more.

For more information, call MWR Registration at 410-278-4907 or e-mail mwr_registration@usag.apg.army.mil.

MWR looks out for singles through BOSS

The "Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers," BOSS, Program meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 2 p.m., building 305, conference room.

The program is Department of the Army directed, installation managed and service member operated to support the overall quality of life, recreation and leisure and community service for single and unaccompanied service members and single parents.

For more information, call Joyce Founds, Morale Welfare and Recreation advisor, at 410-278-2621.

Bowling specials

Buy 'Save-a-Card' at the APG Bowling Center. A 20-game card only costs \$30. It is valid for bowling Monday thru Friday.

The offer runs thru Dec. 31.

For more information, Call the APG Bowling Center, 410-278-4041.

A Christmas Special will

run Dec. 13 through 17. Cost is \$2 per entry, bowl 10 frames but only one ball per frame and the head pin must be hit to score.

One in every 10 will win a ham for Christmas.

New fitness class begins in January

A new fitness class will start in January, just in time to get in shape after the holidays.

For just \$48, take unlimited classes January thru March. Classes will vary between the Aberdeen and Edgewood areas.

Schedules will be posted in each facility and the Athletic Centers.

For more information, call the APG Fitness Center, 410-278-9725, Hoyle Gym and Fitness Center, 410-436-7134, or MWR Registration, 410-278-4907.

MWR End of Season Round Robin Racquetball Tournament

This round robin singles racquetball tournament will

have Advanced, Intermediate, Beginner, and Novice divisions and a male and female division for each.

Cost is \$10.

Event is scheduled for 6 to 11p.m., Dec. 16, in the APG Athletic Center.

Register by Dec. 15.

ERC closes for holiday party

The Equipment Resource Center will be closed noon to 2 p.m., Dec. 16 for its annual Christmas Party.

ERC winter rentals

The Equipment Resource Center Christmas special includes ski and snowboard rentals.

Pick up on Dec. 23 and return by noon, Dec. 27 for a one-day rental fee.

Downhill skis, snowboards, and cross-country ski sets including boots and poles can be rented through March 31.

Ski equipment rentals range from \$80 to \$125 for season-long rentals. Ski racks and bibs are also available for a \$5 rental fee.

Winter campers should check out the A-frame camper, which comes equipped with a stove and sleeping area. The camper is available to rent for \$35 a night.

Skipper's Point campgrounds in the Edgewood Area offers travel trailer campsites, picnic tables, running water, 15 tent sites, barbecue grills and port-a-pots. Campfires are allowed on the sites.

For reservations, call 410-278-4124.

Travel trailer campsites are available for \$5 per night.

Tent sites are available for \$3.50 a night.

Sites for Boy Scouts are available for \$15 a night.

Outdoor Recreation's hours of operation are Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and closed on Sunday and federal holidays.

For more information, call 410-278-5789.

LIBRARY BOOK CORNER

Operating hours of the Aberdeen Area Library, building 3320, are 1 to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday and 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. The Edgewood Area Library is open 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Tuesday. For more information, call 410-278-3417.

The following is a list of some new books available at the APG MWR Libraries:

Night Fall by Nelson Demille

It's summer 2001, five years since TWA Flight 800 went down in the ocean under mysterious circumstances. The official explanation is mechanical failure, but John Corey and wife Kate Mayfield suspect a cover-up involving a steamy videotape and a guided missile.

Twisted by Jonathan Kellerman

Falling Awake by Jayne Ann Krentz

False Profits by Patricia Smiley

Whiteout by Ken Follett

Mantrapped by Fay Weldon

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, as well as a list of available films on DVD.

See Bowling Scores on www.apgnews.apg.army.mil.

SCHOOL LIAISON/YOUTH EDUCATION

Science & Math Academy accepting applications

The Science & Math Academy will hold an open house for prospective students and parents 7 to 9 p.m., Dec. 9 at Aberdeen High School. Applications are being accepted from prospective eighth graders. During the events, parents and students will hear about the academy program, meet the staff, and see the facility located on the third floor of the new Aberdeen High School.

For more information contact Donna Clem, academy coordinator, at dinna.clem@hcps.org or call 410-273-5500, or Dr. Dennis Kirkwood, supervisor of science, at dennis.kirkwood@hcps.org or call 410-588-5217.

Homework help

Homework is available online through the Harford County Public Library system at www.HCPLonline.info, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All sub-

jects are covered for all grade levels.

Maryland high school assessments and children

Everything a parent needs to know and wants to know about now and future testing is available at www.MarylandPublicSchools.org. Start early with student planning for high school. Students graduating from high school in or after 2009 have to pass the High School Assessment (HSA) in algebra/data analysis, government, biology, and English.

The APG School Liaison Office, located in building 2752, room 200, 410-278-2857, has a variety of useful parent resources in booklets and brochures.

Free chess guide available

Pick up a free copy of 'Welcome To The Game of Chess,' one of the best teaching aids available for children and adults who want to learn the game at the APG School Liaison Office.

Christmas holiday schedule for MWR activities

Directorate of Community and Family Activities
Community Recreation Division

Activity	Friday Dec. 17	Saturday Dec. 18	Sunday Dec. 19	Monday Dec. 20	Tuesday Dec. 21	Wednesday Dec. 22	Thursday Dec. 23	
Arts & Crafts AA	10 a.m. to 7 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	
Arts & Crafts EA	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	
Athletic Center	5 a.m. to 10 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	
Auto Crafts	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.	11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.	
Bowling Center	11 a.m. to 10 p.m.	1 to 10 p.m.	1 p.m. to 6 p.m.	11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	11 a.m. to 10 p.m.	11 a.m. to 10 p.m.	
Equipment Rental Center	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	9 a.m. to 3 p.m.	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.	
Fitness Center AA	5:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Closed	Closed	5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.				
Hoyle Gym/ Fitness Center	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	
Ticket and Registration	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.	10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.	
Library AA	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.	11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	
Library EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	
Recreation Center AA	10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	
Snack Bar	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	
Recreation Center EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	
Snack Bar	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	
Ruggles*	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 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	
Activity	Friday Dec. 24	Sunday Dec. 26	Monday Dec. 27	Tuesday Dec. 28	Wednesday Dec. 29	Thursday Dec. 30	Friday Dec. 31	Sunday Jan. 2
Arts & Crafts AA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Arts & Crafts EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Athletic Center	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 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.
Auto Crafts	Closed	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.	11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Closed	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Bowling Center	11 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Closed	Closed	11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	11 a.m. to 9 p.m.	5 to 9 p.m.	10 p.m. to 1 a.m.	Closed
Equipment Rental Center	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.	Closed	Closed
Fitness Center AA	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.	5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Closed	Closed
Hoyle Gym/ Fitness Center	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	6:30 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	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Library AA	Closed	1 to 5 p.m.	11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Closed	11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Closed	1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Library EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Recreation Center AA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Snack Bar	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Recreation Center EA	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Snack Bar	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 3:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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



Army News



No need for medic draft, health affairs chief says

Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

DoD's top medical official said today there is no need for a contingency plan study on drafting medical personnel.

The Selective Service System is studying various iterations of a draft, but is doing so only because a 1987 law requires it, said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., the assistant secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.

Winkenwerder got involved after news stories surfaced about the Selective Service studying a draft of medical personnel.

The doctor said the contingency plan study was not taken at his direction nor at

the direction of anyone in DoD.

"There is no need for such a contingency plan," he said. "The military health system today is ready, capable and flexible, and has an incredible amount of capacity."

DoD also has more than 130,000 skilled, trained medical personnel in the active-duty medical system.

He said there are "many tens of thousands" skilled medical professionals in the reserve components. DoD has 75 hospitals and 450 clinics worldwide.

When Congress passed the 1987 law, the TRICARE health system, in which today 216,000 civilian physicians

participate, was not around. In 1987, DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs health programs were not as closely linked; today VA hospitals provide the department with additional capacity.

In 1987, the computer technology breakthroughs available today were not ready for prime time, and they now help pharmacists, for example, to dispense drugs widely and quickly.

"From my perspective, the planning assumptions for that law are way outdated," Winkenwerder said. "In summary, the military health system has performed superbly in support of our men and women in Iraq and Afghan-

istan all around the world. There is no need for such a contingency plan."

Earlier today on a San Antonio radio station, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said DoD has not requested a draft, nor will the department request that authority.

Rumsfeld called stories surfacing about a draft "a mischievous political effort that's being made to frighten young men and women."

"The truth is we do not need a draft," he stated.

(Editor's note: For reference, visit, *Military Health System Web page*, <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>.)

Army tests flu vaccine half-doses

Army News Service

Army researchers are studying whether half doses of vaccine can prevent flu in healthy Pentagon volunteers.

The study, conducted by the Allergy-Immunology Healthcare Centers Network at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in cooperation with the Department of Health and Human Services, compares the immune responses of participants who receive half doses of vaccine with those who receive full doses.

The purpose of the study isn't to prove that a half dose is the same, but to prove that it isn't inferior to a full dose, said Maj. Molly Klote, research fellow at the Allergy-Immunology Department at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

"We are trying to see whether a half dose of the flu vaccination would be what's called non-immunological inferior to the full dose," said Klote. "Basically, [the half dose] has the same effect on the immune system as the full dose of the vaccine in healthy people. We think a healthy immune system only needs half as much of the vaccine to create the same immune response of a full dose of someone who's older or has a less effective immune system."

If immune responses are similar in the two groups, U.S. health-care providers may be able to respond to future vaccine shortages by giving healthy people half doses. This would allow protection of twice as many people during shortages or major flu epidemics.

The goal was to vaccinate 1,440 individuals who are Military Health System beneficiaries, or enrolled by Nov. 24, between the ages 18 and 64 and who do not fall into DoD's priority categories for receiving the existing vaccine or haven't had a flu shot in the past three years. In addition to the Pentagon site in the course, a second site opened at the Walter Reed Allergy-Immunology Clinic Nov. 18.

"The response has been fabulous for DoD and for readiness since we have so many healthy people in our recruits and Soldiers," said Col. Renata

Engler, chief of the Allergy-Immunology Department at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The only problem is trying to find people who haven't had a flu shot in the last three years, she added.

"The reason why healthy people are so important is because data shows that the best way to protect the most vulnerable people in our population is to immunize those around them," Engler. "Not just in hospitals, but in homes and work areas because, in some cases, people who are at the greatest risk ... don't respond well to the vaccination."

The study requires two visits over a three-week period, starting on the first day of vaccination. Individuals participating in the study must have a tube of blood drawn, which will be used to measure the antibodies to the influenza virus. Once receiving the randomly selected half dose or full dose of the vaccine, individuals are given a diary card to record any symptoms or side effects for the next 21 days.

During that time, the participants will receive two more follow-up surveys by e-mail or phone asking if they had any flu-like illness, unexpected hospital visits or trips to the emergency room for any upper respiratory or flu-like illnesses, said Klote. Surveys will continue for six months after initial enrollment.

On the second visit, individuals will give another tablespoon of blood, and then both samples will be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lab to measure the antibodies.

"It's critical to the study to get people to come back in 21 days or so to get the post blood drawn," said Engler, "because that's when the immune system responds to the vaccine."

One participant, Tony Stampone with the Office of Secretary of Defense, said the study is a good idea and the process was efficient and thorough. It's a good opportunity to immunize as many people to immunize with the same amount, Stampone said.

While other half-dose studies have been done, more data

See **VACCINE**, page 14

Deploying troops getting priority for laser eye surgery

Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

Many people choose laser eye surgery because they think it will make them more attractive or save them from having to grapple to find their glasses all the time.

But for an increasing number of service members, laser eye surgery isn't a cosmetic or convenience issue. It's about saving lives on the battlefield.

"The bottom line is that if you're in the middle of a fight and you can't see the enemy before they see you, you're dead," Army Lt. Col. Scott Barnes, an ophthalmologist at the Warfighter Refractive Eye Clinic at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Barnes said that motivation has spurred special operations and 18th Airborne Corps soldiers at Fort Bragg to flock to the clinic at Womack Army Medical Center "in droves," hoping to get laser eye surgery before their upcoming deployments.

"We're operating full speed ahead," Barnes said. He said the clinic is giving priority to combat troops on deployment orders.

Fort Bragg isn't alone. Throughout the military services, there's a growing recognition that eyeglasses can be a battlefield liability.

Dirt, grime and lack of convenient hygiene facilities make contact lenses impractical in combat zones. On the other hand, eyeglasses break and fog up when subjected to the rigors of combat, like jumping out of airplanes, diving underwater, or crawling through dirt and sand, Barnes said. Some soldiers complain that they interfere with night-vision goggles or gas masks.

Fearing that their eyeglasses might break, Barnes said many deployed troops find themselves stashing extra sets in pockets, rucksacks - wherever they can quickly retrieve them if they need to.

And although the military runs mobile eyeglass fabrication labs to

replace broken eyeglasses, Barnes said they simply can't be as responsive as the 24-hour commercial eyeglass shops that dot American shopping centers nationwide.

Barnes said some troops question what might happen if they are taken prisoner and their captors take their glasses away from them. "How can you have any chance of escaping if you can't see?" Barnes said they ask.

"The threat of having to go without glasses can be a psychological factor for a soldier who is dependent on his glasses," Barnes said. "It boils down to the fact that eyeglasses can be a liability."

Barnes said he'd like to be able to provide laser eye surgery for any soldier who wants it, but that limited time and resources force him to give priority to troops most likely to see combat. "For those guys on the front, in the heat of the battle, it's important for them to be able to be free of their glasses," he said.

The military has come a long way since 2000, when DoD first began allowing people with two common forms of laser eye surgery to enter the military with a medical waiver. People who'd had corrective eye surgery were previously ineligible for military service.

That move was based largely on groundwork laid by the Navy. Naval Medical Center San Diego launched the military's first refractive-surgery program in 1993, primarily serving Navy SEALs who had problems losing contacts or eyeglasses while parachuting or in the water.

Now all the services offer laser eye surgery for their members, although rules vary about who's eligible to receive it and what military jobs they're able to fill. Laser refractive surgery is now permitted for all warfare communities within the Navy and Marine Corps. Officials said more than 10,000 laser procedures have been performed at Navy refractive-surgery centers to date. In addition to Naval Medical Center San Diego,

other Navy facilities offering laser eye surgery are Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., and the National Naval Medical Center, in Bethesda, Md. The surgery is also available at naval hospitals in Bremerton, Wash.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Camp Lejeune, N.C.; and Camp Pendleton, Calif.

The Air Force Warfighter Photorefractive Keratectomy Program went active at the end of 2001. Currently, qualified Air Force people can get the surgery at Wilford Hall Medical Center, Texas; Travis Air Force Base, Calif.; the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colo.; Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.; and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

The Army's first Warfighter Refractive Eye Clinic, at Fort Bragg, opened its doors in May 2000 and has conducted about 16,000 of the surgeries, Barnes said.

The Army now operates four other clinics at Fort Campbell, Ky.; Fort Hood, Texas; Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany; and Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii. In addition, Barnes said the Army conducts laser eye surgery at two centers where it also teaches the procedure: Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and Madigan Army Medical Center at Fort Lewis, Wash. Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio is expected to add the service within the fiscal year, Barnes said.

The most common types of laser eye surgery offered are photorefractive keratectomy, or PRK, and laser in-situ keratomileusis, often referred to as LASIK.

Barnes said 80 percent of his patients chose PRK, a procedure that requires a slightly longer healing time but has less risk of complication.

(Editor's note: A related site for Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Corrective Eye Surgery Information is <http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/bumed/index.cfm?docid=12108>.)

Community-based programs to treat injured Soldiers

Sgt. 1st Class Tammy M. Jarrett
Army News Service

More Soldiers in the Medical Holdover Program may soon be able to receive healthcare in their hometowns as the Army expands the Community Based Health Care Organization program from five to eight organizations.

CBHCOs will open in Virginia and Alabama around Feb. 7 and a third in Utah around March 1, medical officials said during a media roundtable briefing Dec. 2.

The CBHCO program is an integral part of the medical holdover program and was originally started to relieve pressure on medical facilities and installations, said Col. Mike Deaton from the Army Surgeon General Office.

"It is also a means for us to provide care to Soldiers while they live at home and work at nearby military facilities," Deaton said.

The current five programs, operating in Florida, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts and Wisconsin, service a total of 23 states and cares for more than 1,100 Soldiers.

Deaton said the success of

the Community Based Health Care Initiative pilot program led the Army to expand the program to provide regional medical coverage across all 50 states.

"They have evolved from a pilot initiative to be an integral part of the MHO mission," Deaton said.

"They ensure a high standard of medical care-bottom line, the CBHCO is a success story for the Army, its Soldiers and their families," he added.

Medical holdover Soldiers are mobilized reserve-component Soldiers who remain on active duty to receive medical treatment.

Deaton said the program is the Army leadership's top priority, and they are continuing to evaluate and improve the program.

"The Army is committed to taking care of its people and to providing the best possible healthcare-regardless of the Soldier's component and regardless of the nature of the illness or injury," said Deaton. "Our Soldiers have volunteered to stand in harms way for our nation and they deserve the best in healthcare."

One such Soldier is Spc. Logan G. Brown, who

received multiple injuries July 22 when his convoy was ambushed in Iraq. Brown received emergency surgery and eventually sent back to Fort Hood. The El Dorado, Ark., native now receives his care at CBHCO at Camp Robinson, Ark.

He said when he returned from his 30-day convalescent leave from Fort Hood, his paperwork had been processed.

Brown said he couldn't ask for a better program. He's able to be with the people he loves; he didn't get thrown back into civilian life and the care and the leadership is genuine.

"You can tell they [case managers and doctors and platoon sergeants] really care about the Soldier and it means a lot to come home," said the humvee gunner with the 3 - 153rd Infantry, 39th Infantry Brigade.

Staff Sgt. Roberto Scott agrees with Brown on the quality of care provided by the CBHCOs.

He received injuries to his neck, back and right arm in a helicopter accident in Afghanistan Sept. 17.

He was medically evacuated back to Fort Drum, N.Y.,

where he spent nine months being treated for his injuries before entering the CBHCO at Hanscom Air Force, Mass.

Scott said he was amazed, from day one, by the quality treatment he has been receiving.

"I didn't believe I could find such healthcare," said the guardsman with E Battery (TA), 101st Field Artillery. "They really care about the health and welfare of each one of us."

Scott said being able to be with his family is key to his recuperation.

"By going home every night I feel that my condition, my well-being is much better," he said.

The program works either by assigning Soldiers to a military facility within 50 miles of their homes or finding a doctor who takes TRICARE.

The case managers work at the CBHCO and the Soldiers are administratively handled.

Nearly 800 additional physicians, nurses, clerks, and case managers have been hired or mobilized to help with the MHO mission.

Recruiter

From page 5

make a positive change in Iraq," said the administrative specialist from the Third Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga. SRAP participants are free to share their stories in their own words so that the American public can see and hear firsthand what it truly means to be a Soldier, as well as the pride each Soldier takes in his or her mission.

Hundreds of students visited with 101st Airborne Division infantryman Spc. Jeremy Peterson during his SRAP duty with the Rochester, Minn., Recruiting Station.

Clad in his no-longer-dusty desert camouflage uniform, Peterson talked with students about his deployment to Iraq and what it takes to be a Soldier. He also appreciated the extra time to spend with his parents, according to his recruiter, Sgt. Mark Yunker.

In addition to claiming reimbursement for travel expenses and per diem allowance for the 14-day temporary duty, approved SRAP Soldiers may combine the SRAP TDY with their ordinary leave, essentially extending their stay in their hometown.

"It's always a challenge to find the right tool to grab the attention of busy students on their way to and from classes, but the offer to ... speak with a Soldier just back from Iraq proved highly successful," Yunker said. "We'd love to try this again in more of our schools."

The program is open to enlisted Soldiers age 25 or younger in stateside units who have served overseas in support of Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

Soldiers currently serving overseas in support of OEF/OIF are asked to wait until their units return stateside to apply for the program.

Interested Soldiers must apply online at the U.S. Army Recruiting Command's Web site, www.usarec.army.mil. All applications will be screened to ensure Soldiers meet all requirements.

Approved Soldiers will receive notification via e-mail. After receiving the approval notice, Soldiers must have their requests (DA Form 4187) approved by the first lieutenant colonel in their chain of command. The signed 4187 should be faxed to 502-626-0943, and a DD Form 1610 will be created and e-mailed to the Soldier and his/her unit's personnel section (as provided on the DA 4187). Soldiers must have the DD 1610 with them when they report for duty at their designated recruited stations.

For more information, visit www.usarec.army.mil or call 502-626-0448/1582.

Army National Guard Director receives PEO Soldier overview at Test Center



Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz fires the XM-8 Designated Marksman/Automatic Rifle under the guidance of Staff Sgt. Reginald Freeman at the U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center.

Story and photo by Susan Hagan (ATSS) ATC

Army National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, accompanied by Maj. Gen. Bill Ingram, The Adjutant General of North Carolina, chairman of the Adjutant General Association of the United States Army Mod Task Force, visited the U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center Oct. 15 for a Program Executive Office Soldier demonstration of the XM8.

During the visit, Schultz received a briefing on PEO Soldier and had the opportunity to fire several of the new weapons systems that are currently being tested at ATC.

Deputy PEO for PEO Soldier, Rash provided Schultz with an overview of PEO Soldier. PEO Soldier, also known as "Team Soldier" was established in 2002 and is broken down into three Project

Manager offices: Soldier Warrior, Soldier Equipment and Soldier Weapons.

"If you wear it as a Soldier, we provide it," Rash said. "If you like it, we'll hear about it, and if you don't like it, we'll hear that, too, and we'll do our best to improve it."

One of PEO Soldier's programs discussed during the briefing was the Rapid Fielding Initiative. RFI was launched in 2002 by PEO Soldier to quickly provide units and soldiers deployed/deploying to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom with the individual equipment necessary to complete their missions.

"We've done a really great job of equipping the total force with this," Rash said.

PEO Soldier's goal is to finish outfitting the Army by the end of 2007. So far PEO Soldier is on track to meet that goal, according to Rash.

"The attitudes in the ranks change when this stuff is issued..." Schultz said. "Command sergeant majors and the ranks will tell you this."

After the briefings, Schultz was given the opportunity to fire many of the weapons including the XM307 Advanced crew Served Weapon, the Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station and all three variants of the XM8.

"We need to modernize the fleet of weapons," Rash said.

The XM8 comes in three variants: the baseline carbine, the compact carbine and the designated marksman/automatic rifle, and may replace the M16/M4 family of weapons.

The average Soldier will be able to take this weapon [the XM8] out of the box and use it, according to Lt. Col. Matthew Clarke, PM Individual Weapons.

OC&S recognizes safety, environmental excellence

E. C. Starnes
U.S. Army Ordnance Corps

"You don't get to pick when to be safe."

That was a message from the Chief of Ordnance, Brig. Gen. Vincent E. Boles, as he spoke to the 25 Soldiers and civilians who were gathered to receive safety and environmental awards from the U.S. Army Ordnance Center and Schools Nov. 16.

As friends, fellow workers and others gathered to watch, six individuals received Green Star Awards for 100 percent compliance in an environmental audit; five individuals received Green Cross Awards for 100 percent compliance in their safety audit and no lost time accidents for 12 consecutive months; nine individuals received U.S. Army Motor Vehicle Driver Safety Awards for no "at fault" military or civilian on-duty vehicle accidents or moving traffic violations; and three individuals and two organizations were recognized for their support of the safety and environmental programs.

Master of Ceremonies for the event was Deborah Burkins, environmental protection assistant, OC&S Safety and Environmental Office.

Col. Francis R. Merritt, commander of the 61st Ordnance Brigade and the Ordnance Mechanical Maintenance School, noted in his opening remarks that those receiving awards were "some outstanding individuals because it takes a great effort in ensuring the safety of our Soldiers and the quality of our environment." He also noted that the awards were difficult to receive because they required "100 percent."

CFC falls short of goal

Robert Solyan
CFC Chairman

The Aberdeen Proving Ground Combined Federal Campaign has collected \$317,524.65 to date. That is 97.7 percent toward the installation goal of \$325,000.

The campaign has been extended until Dec. 14 to allow key workers to canvass their activities and assure that any remaining pledge cards are collected.

The winners in the final drawing for the large and small "Fort McHenry" Chris White prints were selected Dec. 1. They are ATC's William Martino, who won a large print, and Pvt. Phancrit

See CFC, page 14

Awards

From front page

the unit and was assigned to a chemical and biological disablement and elimination team

Keynote speaker, Edward C. Budnick, chief of the Fire and Emergency Services Division at Aberdeen Proving Ground, noted that the individuals being honored "continue to be out in front."

He explained that the key to success in safety was like the key to success in much of what is done at APG - preparation.

"The largest fire truck and the largest tank in the world are only as good as the preparation that goes into their use," he said. He complimented the efforts of the safety and environmental program at OC&S.

He noted as an example of the efforts of personnel assigned to the center, brigade and school, hazardous materiel incidents had significantly decreased.

"We have gone from one [spill] per week to one per month," Budnick said.

He noted that type of reduced activity has a direct effect on firefighter safety and that he was very much aware of the effort.

Green Star Awards, which included a Commander's Certificate of Achievement and a desk pen set, were given to John Antal, School of Military Packaging and Technology; Staff Sgt. Maritza Cisneros, Noncommissioned Officer Academy; Sgt. Warren Harper, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 61st Ordnance Brigade; Capt. Mark R. Kelpel, 143rd Ordnance Battalion; Pfc. Steven D. Presser, 16th Ordnance Battalion; and Elmer Wymmer, School of Military Packaging and Technology.

Alan Killinger, OC&S Ordnance Museum, also was named as a Green Star Award winner, but was not present to

accept his award.

Receiving Green Cross Awards, which included a Certificate of Merit for Safety signed by the commanding general and a desk pen set, were given to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Richard A. Alston, Command and Staff Department; Gary Boothe, Weapons/Metalworking Services Department; Capt. Mark R. Kelpel, 143rd Ordnance Battalion; Charles W. Taylor, Tactical Support and Equipment Department; and Sgt. 1st Class Carol Vanderhorst, Advanced Automotive and Recovery Division.

Soldiers receiving U.S. Army Vehicle Driver Safety Awards included Sgt. 1st Class Michael Bennett, Sgt. 1st Class Clarence Mason, and Sgt. Carolyn McCarthy, Company A, 16th Ordnance Battalion; Sgt. Benjamin H. Ridenhouse, Company B, 16th Ordnance Battalion; Pfc. Arnold Harris, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 143rd Ordnance Battalion; Staff Sgt. Careen A. Brooks, Sgt. 1st Class Darriet D. Patterson, Sgt. 1st Class Juan Ruiz, and Sgt. Tequann J. Whaley, Company C, 143rd Ordnance Battalion.

Also named as a Driver Safety Award winner, but not present, were Staff Sgt. Melvin Dusharm, Sgt. 1st Class Allen Gibbs and Staff Sgt. Freddie McDaniel Jr., A Company, 16th Ordnance Battalion; Sgt. Christopher Kerperien, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 143rd Ordnance Battalion; and, Sgt. 1st Class Angelo Pennyamon, Company C, 143rd Ordnance Battalion.

A Certificate of Appreci-

ation was given to Arno H. Fells, Wheel Track and Automotive Department, for his support of the Safety Day activities conducted at OC&S.

Also receiving special presentations were the APG Fire Department for their year-round support in such activities as fire prevention, vehicle safety, and training exercises.

The APG Emergency Medical Services were honored for their support in CPR/AED training, medical exercises and safety programs.

Two members of the OC&S Safety and Environmental Office were also honored for their long-time services to the HAZMART program. Deborah S. Burkins received the Department of the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service, and Richard N. Zalusky received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service.

As he concluded his remarks, Boles noted that he often speaks of "7 for 18." During his unit's deployment to Iraq, he explained, 18 Soldiers were killed during the year. Seven were to hostile fire and the remainder were due to preventable accidents.

"After every accident you would hear, 'I knew that was going to happen,'" Boles said.

He noted that speaking to those gathered for the ceremony was like speaking in church.

He said that what was important was that, "When you walk out [of this ceremony] who else are you going to touch and make an impact. Watch what you correct, but also look at what you let go by."

contributions to environmental training programs.

Robert McKenna, a Booz Allen Hamilton consultant supporting the Compliance Branch, received a note from Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Johnson, director of the Installation Management Agency, acknowledging his contributions to the Army Common Levels of Support program.

Misha Turner of the Preservation Branch and Larry Webber of the Compliance Branch received notes from Craig E. College, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for infrastructure analysis, for their work on a model used to assess military value.

the 22nd Chemical Battalion (TE) in general.

She was awarded the honorary "Heart of Guardian" award, a special organization award created to recognize a person who gives their all,

been deploying in support of the Global War on Terrorism since October 2001.

Sgt. Hufnagel's mother, Mrs. Emily Gustafson, was recognized for her support in her daughter's recovery and of

Tree

From front page

which some enlisted members are able to visit their families across the states, and others head to stations elsewhere.

"We thank you for your service," Wright said. "You are a tribute to the nation and Aberdeen Proving Ground. Thank you for protecting this country and our constitution."

Chaplain (Col.) William Willet provided an invocation for the ceremony.

"We will soon throw a switch to light the tree to bring a greater life to these evergreen branches, signaling that you are always with us and that we are not alone," Willet said. "May you, oh Lord, watch over the Soldiers."

Then, Wright called Pvt. Angela Minnich, 18, the youngest Soldier from the 16th Ordnance Battalion, who is chosen each year to help light the tree.

Wright also presented Minnich with one of his commander's coins for her part in the ceremony.

Then, members of the 389th Army Band played Christmas carols as Wright led the crowd in song.

After 'Jingle Bells,' Wright called upon Drill Sgt. William Bravo, 16th Ordnance Battalion, to sing 'Deck the Halls.' Bravo took the microphone and asked for a Soldier volunteer to sing along. Bravo chose Pvt. Kenneth Champion to accompany him.

"He looked like he knew the words; so that's why I pulled him out to help sing," Bravo said.

Wright, Bravo and Champion received a round of 'Hooahs' and applause from the crowd.

As the caroling ended, Santa arrived with Mrs. Claus on an APG fire engine decked out in red, white, and green Christmas lights accompanied by firemen.

Santa bellowed "Ho, ho, ho" to the crowd and greeted children as Mrs. Claus handed out candy canes to everyone.

Santa spoke with the Soldiers about the upcoming Exodus.

"In 13 days you're going home!" Santa said. "Hooah!" the Soldiers replied loudly.

Santa asked everyone to "remember those Soldiers who can't be home for Christmas."

Then Santa and Mrs. Claus departed on the ladder truck waving and wishing everyone well.

One Soldier gave his thoughts on the ceremony. "I liked it," Champion said. "It was delightful."

Champion also wished everyone a "Merry Christmas".

Mrs. Wright, who also attended with their daughter Abby, 9, commented on the festivities.

"This is the best ceremony we've been to," Mrs. Wright said.



Photo by MEGHAN BOWEN
Santa greets Abby Wright, 9, daughter of Aberdeen Proving Ground, garrison and deputy installation commander Col. John T. Wright and his wife Tammy, at the AA Tree Lighting Dec. 5.

going above and beyond in support of the organization and its Soldiers.

The 22nd Chemical Battalion (TE), formerly the U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit, is the nation's longest

continuously serving chemical unit in the Army. With over 60 years of experience in chemical/biological response, the organization has a long history of meeting the changing needs of the nation.

HST and Post Chapel sponsor blood drive

'Blood Donated From Our Own For Our Own'

Story and photo by
Meghan Bowen
APG News

Eligible Soldiers and civilians donated blood to benefit troops overseas at the Aberdeen Proving Ground Garrison Blood Drive at the Aberdeen Area Post Chapel Nov. 19.

The Armed Services Blood Program conducted the blood drive, which was co-sponsored by Headquarters Support Troop and the Post Chapel.

Alick Munroe, ASBP Blood Donor recruiter, from the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, explained the importance of donating blood through the installation blood drives instead of outside donation centers.

"If the military does not have enough blood to supply

our Soldiers, then we have to purchase the pints from our civilian counterparts," said Munroe, who helped process donors and oversaw the drive.

A flyer for the drive illustrated the need for donations by picturing troops along with a world map illustrating the countries where the armed forces are currently serving.

"150,00 Reasons To Give Blood," read the flyer. "Blood Donated From Our Own For Our Own."

"All units donated are used for United States armed forces service men and women fighting the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan," said 1st Sgt. Lonzia Hawkins Jr., HST, who coordinated the drive.

"Just one pint of blood [can] help save [up to] three lives," said Hawkins, who set a

goal of 75 donors to give one pint of blood each, which was met and surpassed during the drive.

"Our blood drive was very successful and netted 109 units," said Maj. Anissa McNeill, HST commander.

The success of the drive came through the combined efforts of the ASBP lab technicians, HST and chapel staff and the donors, Munroe said.

A 23-member team helped process the donations during the drive, according to Munroe.

"When we have big drives, we borrow a few lab technicians from Bethesda," Munroe said.

Munroe explained the series of steps and medical checks that donors go through before giving blood to ensure

eligibility.

The blood drive process

The prospective donor goes through a prescreen process to determine if they are eligible to donate blood.

The donor's information is then registered on the computer.

Vital signs and hemoglobin levels are checked, and a medical history interview is conducted with each donor.

After a phlebotomist draws the donor's blood, the donor is offered a variety of snacks from cookies to cheesecake and is observed for 10 minutes to ensure there are no negative reactions to the procedure.

Each donor receives a stress ball and T-shirt as a token of appreciation, according to Munroe.

One donor, Airman 1st

Class Joshua Bemis, said he saw the blood drive flyer at the detachment.

"I haven't given blood since high school," Bemis said. "I wanted to help."

Another donor, Justin Shumaker, a U.S. Army Research Laboratory employee, said he heard about the drive from a friend.

"Three people from our office came to donate," Shumaker said.

Peter Quamina, medical lab technician and phlebotomist of 22 years, commented on the response of APG donors.

"It's been very good. We appreciate all that we can collect," Quamina said.

ASBP takes donations from each branch of Aberdeen every two months "from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and

Thursdays mostly," said Munroe who commented on the turnout.

"For the students, the schedule is set annually," Munroe said. "We'd like to get an ongoing schedule or flyer handed out for everyone though."

"Usually our goal is to collect 100 pints," he said, "and we met that today thanks to the folks at APG. We get really good support here. APG is our bread and butter."

Munroe added that they are currently in need of 'O' positive and negative due to an increase of injured military personnel returning from Iraq.

For more information on upcoming blood drives, call Munroe at 301-295-2109.

Commentary

The Bible holds the wisdom

Chap. (Maj.) Charles Fields

Conventional wisdom says armed forces chaplains experience a wider range of ministry opportunities in a year than civilian ministers do in a life time. Spending the past few years as a battalion chaplain, I have helped families and individuals work through just about every problem you can think of. I have seen what works and what doesn't.

And I believe there is a book, more than likely in your own home, which has the answers to all of your problems.

This book has been the object of never-ending persecution.

Edicts have been issued to ensure every copy was destroyed.

Commands have been given that all found with a copy

should be put to death. Every possible effort has been made to undermine faith in its inspiration and authority.

Yet it is still with us, and is the best-selling book of all time - six billion copies printed, in almost every language.

It is the only book that describes a continuous history from the first man to the present era.

It is the only religious book containing detailed prophecies of events which are to come.

And it is the only book which has the power to convict people of sin, leading them to the only one who can free them from sin.

This book, of course, is the Bible.

Take your problems to God and his word. He'll take your burden, and you'll walk away with peace.

CFC

From page 12

Sourasak, from the U.S. Army Ordnance Center and Schools' 16th Ordnance Battalion, Company C. Deputy Installation Commander Col. John T. Wright conducted the drawing.

The APG CFC office will officially close on Dec. 14.

The 2004 Contributor's Guide for national/international organizations is at Web site, <http://www.cfcmd.org>. Paper copies of the guide and pledge cards are available from each organization key worker or at the APG CFC office.

For more information, visit the APG CFC office at building 120, room 114, or call Lisa Mack or Betty Scott at 410-278-0001/0002/0003.

Vaccine

From page 12

is needed to apply results to the population as a whole, officials said. The Army study is looking at additional age groups, numbers of clinic visits and other health outcomes of the participants, and is adding an additional flu season of data. The Food and Drug Administration, which licenses U.S. vaccines, needs such additional data before making a decision about half-dose administration.

The vaccine used in the study is the same U.S. vaccine that is currently available for high-risk individuals. The study will use less than one-tenth of a percent of the flu vaccine DoD is allotted for this flu season, an investment with the potential to reduce illness and save lives, both in its beneficiaries and in the general public, officials said.

Information about the DoD's flu vaccination priorities, this year's flu season, and flu prevention is available from the Military Vaccine Agency, on the Web at <http://www.vaccines.mil/>. Walter Reed's Vaccine Healthcare Center is on the Web at <http://www.wramc.amedd.army.mil/>.

Pets

From page 3

with consequences ranging from humorous to tragic.

Giving a party? Invite pets only if sure they'll enjoy the festivities and that the guests will be pleased with their presence. Don't expect shy, poorly socialized or easily spooked pets to feel comfortable in a house-full of strangers. The mix of strange voices, sights and odors can unhinge an ordinarily unflappable animal. Never force a pet to socialize if he seems the least bit uncomfortable.

Tiger or Rover not a party animal? Create a "safe retreat" in a quiet area of the home, inaccessible to guests and clearly labeled with a sign on the door. But even if he's a social butterfly, have his "safe retreat" ready in case he becomes frightened, tired or over-stimulated. Provide food, water, favorite toys and consider playing soft music to mask unfamiliar sounds. Periodically check on the pet and reassure him that life will soon return to normal. Provide cats with a clean litter box. Take a break from the festivities to enjoy a brisk walk with the canine buddy.

Warn guests to avoid opening the door of the "safe retreat." Explain why it's a bad idea to offer party foods to pets, even with friendly intentions. Make sure all guests and visitors know if your pet is an indoors-only animal, so he isn't innocently let out. All pets, even strictly indoor animals, should wear collars with pet owner's phone number, just in case they slip out and become lost.

After the party, carefully clean up all food and drinks (especially alcohol) before letting pets out of their retreats. Then, enjoy a private party with special treats, a walk or a play session with [the pet's] favorite toy.

With just a bit of planning and sensitivity to a pet's needs, pet owner's can keep their animal companions safe, secure and happy throughout the holidays. Keep an eye out, and be ready to intervene to shield pets from the adverse effects of stress, excitement or changes in routine. Remember that each animal is an individual, and some are much more sensitive to stress, or more adventurous, than others.

Knowing a pet's personality, preferences and quirks, and anticipating and planning for solutions to possible problems, will help the pet owner and the pet safely and joyously enjoy every day, holidays included.

Drains

From page 4

Since beginning disposal operations in April 2003, workers at the ABCDF have safely neutralized over 55 percent of the Aberdeen mustard agent stockpile. More information about storage and disposal operations at ABCDF is available at the

U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency's Web site at <http://www.cma.army.mil>.