



Med-Alert

The 5th Brigade (HS) Newsletter

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THE COLONEL'S CORNER

NEW YEAR

Now that 2002 has arrived, it is time to focus our attention on the remaining challenges and opportunities for this fiscal year. With your help, we will continue to improve the performance and effectiveness of the 5th Brigade (HS) and continue to stand out with distinction.

I ask that each of you continue your commitment to excellence and to making our brigade the best that it can be.

FROM THE S-1

A make-up APFT will be conducted in April 2002 for those not able to take the test in October 2001. If you need to take the test prior to April, contact Mr. Garza at (210) 221-5041 to make arrangements for testing.

FROM THE S-3 AND SSA

The start of a calendar year always brings the urge to take note of where we've been and where we should go as individuals and as an organization. As individuals go, we are all on our own, but I couldn't resist commenting on the Army in the New Year and on my brief perspective on the status of the Victory Team.

What a year of highs and lows 2001 was for the Army. A new administration made its presence

known in quickly studying the Defense Department and in preparing the Quadrennial Defense Review. All signs pointed to further reductions in our Army and a move toward more reliance on technologies, standoff weapons systems, etc. September 11TH caused a quick reassessment of the state of our military and the nature of the world around us. Let us say that a heavy dose of "real world" was inflicted upon our nation. Much of the pre-WTC thinking was shelved or redirected. Our Army has performed magnificently and has reaffirmed the quality of its training, the strength of its values, and the courage of American soldiers. The President's commitment to winning the first war of the 21ST Century will challenge us. More difficult days are to be expected. But the value of the Army to the nation will not soon be questioned.

At the same time, it is and has been apparent that our Army is not configured ideally to face the emerging challenges of this brave new (strangely old) world. We are tremendously adaptive and find a way to get the job done, but we are not currently as efficient or as well aligned against the expected threat as we would want to be. Our resources are still constrained. We are still assigned the mission of defending the nation and winning its wars. We must know and overcome threats that are not army-on-army sorts of engagements. Our soldiers must expect to be hit where they are most vulnerable and it is incumbent on us to prepare in the new year to close the vulnerability gaps. There should be no letdown in our sense of urgency to protect the force and to train others to do the same.

The Secretary of the Army has just announced a major reorganization of his directorate in conjunction with an overhaul of the Army Staff. Additional corresponding reorganizations are expected at lower levels of command throughout the Army. These reorganizations will require "WILL" and an open mind to be implemented successfully in wartime, but are both essential to



our current needs and a preparation for the larger Transformation of the Army that is underway.

The Transformation is also being accelerated due to the Threat and the renewed focus and interest on the part of the nation to be strong and safe. These are truly exciting and remarkable times to be in the Army. We are making history and will be proud to have served and contributed to a true revolution in military affairs.

I think we are entering the New Year with gradually improving communications and an ability to go "to the next level" in production and readiness. Increasingly, outstanding leaders are making a difference and are truly embracing the fact that we are a critical component of **The Army** and are working in a high stakes, real world environment. Mobilization readiness, family support, MOSQ, equipment accountability, personnel records, mentoring, etc. are examples of critical areas where we must continuously improve in order to provide for the defense of this great nation and to take care of our most precious asset, our people.

Let's resolve to move our great Division forward. Build on past successes and don't accept mediocre results. Make a difference! Let's have a happy, safe, and successful Army New Year.

By Col James E. Archer, ADC, OPS, 95th Division (IT)

FROM THE S-4

Soldiers: Don't be caught without your Military Clothing/Individual Equipment.

As is so often the case in the military a situation has been brought to light because several of our fellow soldiers are on active duty in support of military activity in Afghanistan. Most are aware that E-4s and below are required to have an annual, and upon transfer, clothing inspection to

ascertain if the soldier has the appropriate number, type, and size of required items in their possession and that the items are serviceable. E-5s and above (enlisted only) can sign a statement, annually or upon transfer, indicating that the clothing is on hand in the appropriate number, type, size, and serviceability. Individual equipment items are included in the annual inspection, or self-proclamation of possession.

Recent experience has indicated that this is an area where emphasis must be placed. Several of our soldiers have arrived for processing without the required items being in their possession. Some items on hand have been unserviceable. Several annual inspection or self-proclamations were not current. These situations caused time and effort to be expended in a reaction mode. Reactionary activity is seldom the best way to handle day-to-day operations.

By Col Schacht, DCSLOG, 95th Division (IT)

90-DAY EVENT CALENDAR

January

22nd – 25th Mobilization Course
25th – 26th YSB to Division

VEHICLE REGISTRATION NOTICE

Due to temporary unavailability of DoD registration stickers, priority for issue of vehicle registration stickers will be for active duty and civilian employees. Provost Marshal anticipates issue of more registration stickers in late January and will announce when stickers are available for open registration.

20-YEAR-HIGH MILITARY PAY RAISE AVERAGES 6.9 PERCENT



Service members will see an average increase of 6.9 percent in their January pay.

“It’s the largest pay increase in 20 years.” Navy Capt. Chris Kopang, DoD director of compensation, said in a recent American Forces Information Service interview. In general, officers will see their pay increase 5 percent, he said, and enlisted service members get a 6 percent boost in their pay beginning Jan. 1.

Several pay grades will see significantly larger increases.

“We have chosen to target the pay raise to certain pay grades that we feel need an extra boost because of retention needs.” Kopang said. For instance, officers in grades O-3 and O-4 will receive 6 and 6.5 percent increases respectively.

Non-commissioned officers are also receiving larger raises, Kopang said, with the highest increases — up to 10 percent — going to the highest enlisted grades.

Enlisted members in grades E-5 and E-6 will see an average 7.5 percent increase, E-7s an average increase of 8.5 percent, and up to 10 percent for E-9s.

Certain lower-ranking grades also will see increases that have nothing to do with percentages or retention, but to fix inequities in the pay table, he said.

For instance, on the 2001 pay table an E-3 with under two years of service would make more money by going over two years in service as an E-3 than by getting promoted to E-4.

“We thought that sent the wrong signal,” Kopang said. “We wanted to send the signal that people should strive for promotion quicker.

President Bush in February 2001 pledged an additional \$1.4 billion to go toward pay raises for

service members. He signed the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act, which included the extra money, Dec. 28, 2001. Without this money, Kopang said, members would have gotten a 4.6 percent across-the-board increase at the New Year.

Higher raises for NCOs reflect the changing demographics of a more-educated force. Kopang explained the military pay tables are based on the premise that enlisted members are high school graduates. Most of today’s enlisted members have some college under their belts. The services strongly encourage members to further their education.

Kopang estimated that up to 40 percent of senior NCOs are college graduates. “We can’t pay them as much as a college degree holder right now,” he said of the senior enlisted grades. The idea, he said, was to bring their earnings closer to civilian counterparts who are high school graduates with some college.

Housing allowance rates have increased as well. In 2001, military members not living in government provided quarters paid an average 15 percent of their housing costs out of their own pockets. DoD is working to ensure the Basic Allowance for housing covers all of a member’s housing costs by 2005.

In 2002, for instance, members will pay 11.3 percent of their housing costs out of pocket on average. Housing allowances are tied to actual housing costs in a given geographic area, so some areas are getting larger rate increases than others. No rates are going down, though. Kopang said DoD has implemented individual and geographic rate protection. Even if housing costs decrease in an area, the rates won’t go down.

Members will not get a lower rate in 2002 than they did in 2001 as long as they stay at the same duty station, and members moving into an area



won't get a lower rate than individuals who live there already, he said

By Sgt 1st Class Kathleen T. Rhem, USA
American Forces Press Service

YOUR CHAIN OF COMMAND

5th Brigade (HS)
COL Angel Padilla CSM Alfred Habelman

10th Battalion
MAJ James Hickey Vacant

3457th
LTC Floyd Priester CSM Blanca Ramirez

Practical Nurse Detachment
MAJ Mary Gomez Vacant

HHD – 5th Brigade (HS)
CPT Mario Avila MSG Dan Carlin

PAY INFORMATION

There are many Internet military links to assist with all types of pay questions. A few of them are listed here.

Finance Regulations: www.dfas.mil

TC 21-7: www.finance.army.mil

Per Diem Rates/BAH Rates:
www.dtic.mil/perdiem

Pay Tables: www.dfas.mil/money/milpay

Retired Pay Calculator:
www.asafm.army.mil/fo/fo.asp

Thrift Savings Plan: www.tsp.gov