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FLO Notes

Soldiers on Point for the Nation – Persuasive in Peace, Invincible in War

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Chief's Corner

Adapting to meet the changing needs of our Army families

Often times the skills possessed by Soldiers on the battlefield are many of the same skills required by the people who sustain our base operations. Though these skills are learned through a different manner, and under different circumstances, the need for adaptive leadership exists at our installations as well as on the battlefield. Applying the skills we learn in an environment of change, multiple deployments and through periods of long separations is critical to the endurance of our family and support systems.

In Iraq, Afghanistan and many other hot spots throughout the world Soldiers are using their own ingenuity to combat a very adaptive and formidable enemy.

Our Soldiers re-design their body armor, revise tactics and take appropriate action to ensure a better chance of survivability. At best this is the corner stone of good ole American ingenuity.

Today, Army families are doing very much the same thing. They are learning to be more adaptive, independent and better informed. A new generation of the Army family is in the making and it demands creative thinking; program support, integration and initiative; as well as re-thinking how we deliver support systems to ensure success.

In a recent report – "Developing Adaptive Leaders: The Crucible Experience of Operation Iraqi Freedom," published in July by Leonard Wong – the executive summery states "lieutenants and captains are learning to make decisions in chaotic conditions and to be mentally agile in executing counterinsurgency and nation-building operations simultaneously. As a result, the Army will soon have a cohort of company-grade officers who are accustomed to operating independently, taking the initiative and adapting to changes."

Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., the director of the Strategic Studies Institute writes in the report's Forward, that "for several years, the leadership literature in both the military and civilian arenas has been replete with calls for adaptable and innovative leaders. The U.S. Army is transforming as its lowest officer ranks are filled with leaders who have learned to deal with ambiguity, change and complexity. It is now the Army's responsibility to leverage this newly-developed cohort and continue to develop the confidence and creativity of tomorrow's senior leaders."

It is reasonable that in an environment of complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty, which is typical of post-Sept. 11, the families of our Soldiers must also learn to be adaptive, independent, and operate without easy access to some of the Army's numerous support systems.

It is also reasonable for my civilian counterparts to comprehend and adapt to this same environment with the understanding that taking the initiative, and adapting to change, may mean the difference between mediocre service delivery and excellence.

Innovative and adaptive leadership comes from all ranks throughout the Army system. It comes from our uniformed leadership, our forward thinking civilians and the families who are affected by those who serve our great nation. When we work together as a unified, interdependent team willing to be the agent of change for the collective good of all, the system is at its absolute best.

Family member participation in political activities

While federal employees, including Soldiers, have many restrictions regarding political activity, family members are not bound by all the same restrictions of the Hatch Act.

The rules in Department of Defense Directive 1344.10, which governs political activity by military servicemembers, were not intended to address family participation in political activity.

Therefore, family members may run for political office, solicit campaign contributions and speak before partisan political activities. They may not, however, conduct these political activities from their home if they live on a military installation.

Soldiers and family members may display a political bumper sticker on a privately owned vehicle whether they live on or off the installation. They may also display a political sign in the yard of their residence if they live off the installation.

They may not, however, display a larger political sign, banner or poster on a vehicle the Soldier drives or parks on an installation, nor may they post a political sign in the yard of their government quarters.

For more information on restrictions

governing participation in political activities, the National Military Family Association has published a fact sheet on "Political Activity While on Active Duty," which is available on the association's Web site at **www.nmfa.org/factsheets/political.pdf**; additionally, DoD Directive 1344 may be viewed online at **www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/html/134410.htm**.

New DoD initiative supports military families

John M. Molino, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, attended the National Conference of State Legislatures to give a presentation at a session of the Human Services and Welfare Committee on supporting military families. In addition to his presentation, members of his staff provided information as part of the NCSL exposition at a booth promoting the "USA 4 Military Families" initiative.

In the session, Mr. Molino addressed the support services provided to servicemembers and their families, particularly during extended deployments, and also the concerns of military families that can best be resolved by state governments. He outlined the support provided through the 700 family assistance centers supporting families at military installations and in towns across America. He described the support provided through the recently developed Military OneSource toll-free counseling service available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, from anywhere in the world, that also includes face-to-face counseling when requested. Molino went on to outline the support provided to military parents and military youth through childcare and youth programs provided by Department of Defense and partner organizations.

Molino told the audience about how the DoD has engaged the states to ensure these support mechanisms are providing the intended results for National Guard and reserve families. Molino, along with other senior DoD officials, attended a roundtable in Boise, Idaho, to help prepare Idaho National Guard families for their upcoming deployment. He said the Department intends to engage with Texas, North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, and other interested states to do similar work to remove or minimize barriers that inhibit military families from achieving stability in their lives.

Molino went on to outline the five key areas where states can best assist active-duty servicemembers and their families in supporting their mobile military life style:

- Providing in-state tuition to servicemembers and their families.
- Supporting children of military families during school transfers and deployments.
- Supporting careers for military spouses through easier transfer of licensure and certification between states.
- Unemployment compensation for military spouses.
- Protection from payday lending practices.

He relayed to the audience how this message was being delivered to the governors at their conference in Seattle the previous weekend and to the Congress at a hearing on the same day as the session. Dr. David Chu, the under secretary of defense for Personnel and Readiness addressed the governors at a closed session to outline these points. Charlie Abell, Chu's principal deputy, provided testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families in July, to describe how states could assist servicemembers and their families.

American Red Cross

DoD recommends Red Cross program changes

The Defense Department and American Red Cross, with their long history of working together to support the military, have completed an assessment that recommends some Red Cross services be refocused toward current needs while eliminating redundancy.

A recent DoD report to Congress proposes a plan be developed and implemented during the next year that redefines and streamlines services the Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services program provides to the armed forces and their families.

Some services provided through the Armed Forces Emergency Services might overlap with those DoD now provides, the report concluded. In light of strong family support programs now universally available throughout the military, the report recommends that DoD and the American Red Cross develop a plan to eliminate redundancies.

Continuing decreases in public donations to the American Red Cross, a trend that began in the early 1990's, has left the organization short in covering costs of the Armed Forces Emergency Services program, the report acknowledged. Between 1994 and 2003, Congress appropriated $106.9 million toward the cost of the program, with the American Red Cross covering the rest through its general operating funds.

While calling for a refinement of services, the report recognizes the support the American Red Cross has provided to military members and their families throughout its history. This includes emergency communications between servicemembers and their families, in-theater support for deployed troops, and community-based support for military families through nearly 900 American Red Cross chapters and 108 Armed Forces Emergency Services stations. The emergency services program also provides servicemembers with emergency financial assistance, with reimbursement paid through the military aid societies.

The report was completed in consultation with Red Cross leadership and signed by Charles Abell, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for Personnel and Readiness. It also recommended input from the heads of the unified combatant command and military service chiefs before final decisions on changes to the Armed Forces Emergency Services program.

For more information on the American Red Cross, visit the ARC Web site at **www.redcross.org**.

USO distributes 300,000th care package, expands support

United Service Organizations has distributed more than 300,000 Operation USO Care Packages to troops

since the program began in September 2002, USO officials announced recently.

Initiated by the USO of Metropolitan Washington, Operation USO Care Package is a way for the American people to show their support for servicemembers, officials said, and is endorsed by the Defense Department.

The packages include items specifically requested by military personnel serving in Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, such as prepaid international calling cards, disposable cameras, toiletries, snacks and playing cards.

"The tremendous success of Operation USO Care Package is a true testament to the support USO volunteers and the American people provide for our men and women deployed in the war against terrorism," said Edward A. Powell, president and chief executive officer of USO World Headquarters. "This is but one example of the bridge the USO provides to individuals and corporations to reach out and show their support for military personnel."

Expanding its outreach to troops, the USO opened a center in Kuwait last December, and recently opened centers in Qatar and in Vicenza, Italy. The Qatar center offers troops a 96-hour pass through the Rest and Recuperation Program, where they can take a break and enjoy cultural and sporting activities.

Another special program for deployed troops is USO Operation Phone Home. Donations to this program help the USO purchase prepaid, international calling cards for servicemembers, including those stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To help boost troop morale, the USO also increased the number of celebrity entertainment tours over the last few years. These included numerous tours to Iraq, Afghanistan and other locations in the Persian Gulf region, as well as stateside "welcome home" celebrations for returning troops, USO officials noted.

To support these special programs and other services the USO provides to military personnel and their families, people can call 1-800-USO-7469 toll free or go to the USO World Headquarters Web site. People also can contact local USO centers, USO officials added, to volunteer their time and services or to make monetary contributions. Locations and Web links can be found on the USO headquarters site – **www.uso.org**.

Begin planning for Make A Difference Day

Make A Difference Day is the most encompassing national day of helping others – a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. Everyone can participate. Created by "USA Weekend" magazine, Make A Difference Day is an annual event that takes place on the fourth Saturday of every October. The next event is Oct. 23. Young and old, individuals and groups, anyone can carry out a volunteer project that helps others.

Each year in April, hundreds of good deeds done on Make A Difference Day are selected for honors, headlines and charitable donations. Make A Difference Day supporter Paul Newman, as sole owner of Newman's Own, donates all his profits and royalties after taxes for educational and charitable purposes. Newman will donate $10,000 each to 10 selected projects.

Make a Difference Day deadlines:

- Mid-August: Promotional launch. "USA Weekend" publishes stories about the annual event and encourages its 50 million readers to take part. Entry forms and related Make A Difference Day articles are published almost weekly through October.
- Mid-September: Deadline to tell "USA Weekend" your plans for possible inclusion in a "USA Weekend" cover story featuring planned projects. Please register online. With this information, they can steer local volunteers and media your way.
- October: Make A Difference Day
- Mid-November: All entry forms must be postmarked by this date to be eligible for an award.
- April 2005: Outstanding Make A Difference Day projects are honored with charitable donations and accolades in "USA Weekend" magazine during National Volunteer Week. Ten projects receive $10,000 from Paul Newman.

For more information visit **www.usaweekend.com/diffday**.

AAFES, charities distribute $400,000 in "Gifts from the Homefront"

Since the Army and Air Force Exchange Service began the "Gifts from the Homefront" program last year, people from all walks of life have rallied around America's troops by contributing $406,745 towards the program designed to lift the morale of deployed troops around the world. The certificates, which can be purchased by any individual or civic organization, allow servicemembers to purchase items of necessity and convenience at PX and BX facilities around the world.

"Gifts from the Homefront" certificates can be addressed to "any servicemember" or individual servicemembers. AAFES' charitable partners have been key in the distribution of certificates earmarked for "any servicemember." The USO, American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society and Fisher House have distributed more than 7,000 certificates, totaling more than

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$120,000, to deployed troops. Friends and family have purchased $283,645 of "Gifts from the Homefront" certificates for individual servicemembers.

"Working with the USO, American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society and Fisher House has allowed AAFES to get certificates into the hands of servicemembers that need them most," said AAFES' Chief of Corporate Communications Lt. Col. Debra Pressley. "AAFES' relationship with these charitable partners allows any American to have a direct impact on the morale of a deployed servicemember, even if they don't have a name or address for a particular Soldier or Airman."

Because the gift certificates can be used for merchandise already stocked at contingency locations, "Gifts from the Homefront" are a safe alternative to traditional care packages that place unnecessary strain on the military mail system. Servicemembers can purchase exactly what they need with the certificates because they can be applied to a wide range of products, which are currently stocked by AAFES.

Those wishing to send a "Gift from the Homefront" can simply log on to **www.aafes.com** or call 1-877-770-4438 to purchase gift certificates in $10 or $20 denominations. From there, the "Gift from the Homefront" may be sent to an individual servicemember (designated by the purchaser) or distributed to "any servicemember" through the USO, American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society or Fisher House.

"Gifts from the Homefront" gift certificates can be redeemed at any AAFES facility in the world including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom locations. To date, AAFES operates some 56 stores throughout central and southwest Asia, serving troops and lifting morale of those soldiering in austere, harsh conditions.

Guard, reserve can seek reimbursement for medical, dental claims

National Guard and reserve members who paid their medical and dental bills and saved their receipts may now seek reimbursement from TRICARE, officials of the military healthcare system

announced recently.

Officials said the system will begin processing medical and dental claims for Guard and reserve members who meet certain eligibility requirements. Only guardsmen and reservists issued "delayed-effective-date active-duty orders" for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation, and their families, may be eligible to have medical claims reimbursed.

More information on how to submit claims or to see if your expenses are eligible for reimbursement, is available from the TRICARE Web site at **www.tricare.osd.mil/news/2004/news0416.cfm**.

Armed Forces Voters Week begins Sept. 3

The Department of Defense recently announced plans for Armed Forces Voters Week, which begins Sept. 3. This event's goal is to encourage all citizens voting under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, who have not registered to vote or requested an absentee ballot this year, to do so as soon as possible.

The support of commanders and voting assistance officers is critical to the success of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), which can be contacted through the DoD Voting Information Center (VIC).

Citizens may reach the VIC toll-free from 66 countries using the toll-free numbers listed on the FVAP Web site – **www.fvap.gov**. In the Untied States, voters can call toll-free at 1-800-438-VOTE (8683), local (703) 588-1584 or use DSN 425-1584. Additionally, the FVAP can be reached via e-mail at **vote@fvap.ncr.gov**.

Military seeks to protect against identity theft

As stricter penalties go into effect for identity theft, the Defense Department and the services are taking steps to protect servicemembers, their families and DoD civilians from being victimized.

Identity theft occurs when someone uses another person's name, Social Security number or other personal information to apply for credit, buy goods and services, or commit other fraud.

President Bush signed a bill into law July 15 stiffening penalties for identity thieves. He said they undermine public trust while "running up bills on credit card accounts that the victim never knew existed" and "quickly damage[ing] a person's lifelong efforts to build and maintain a good credit rating."

For more information, see a related American Forces Press Service article at **www.defenselink.mil/news/Jul2004/n07232004_2004072305.html**.

Volunteer resources

The Points of Light Foundation recently added a new section to their Web site – **www.pointsoflight.org** – entitled Resources. The site features more than 100 resources. While some of these resources are only for Points of Light members, others may be of use to anyone.

Well-Being Liaison Office

The Well-Being Liaison Office wishes to say a fond farewell to one of its dedicated Constituent Liaisons.

Andrea Hall, who joined the WBLO staff in October 2003, left in mid-August to spend more time with her two children – Alec, 6, and Alyse, 5.

During her time with the WBLO, Hall has served the members of the Well-Being constituent communities through her efforts as a member of the Army Information Line staff and was instrumental in providing assistance to several of our severely-disabled Soldiers as the Army stood up the Army Disabled Soldier Support System (DS3) in April.

We wish her luck in all her future endeavors.