The Voice

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photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt

Pfc. Jason Schlottman (left) and Pfc. Toni Plucinik, both signal intelligence analysts from the Reception and Holding Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade, prepare sandwiches for the homeless in Washington. Members of Better Opportunities for Single Servicemembers volunteer with the Salvation Army to bring evening meals to homeless individuals living on the streets of Washington.

BOSS feeds Homeless in D.C. Area

by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt
Editor, The Voice

The Fort Meade Better Opportunities for Single Servicemembers and the Salvation Army have joined forces to bring the homeless of the Washington area an evening meal filled with bologna sandwiches, chips and juice on November 25.

ìI just like helping out and itís something to do. I was in BOSS in Korea. I just got here last week and the sign for feeding the homeless was up. I went and talked to the BOSS rep and she hooked me up,î said Pfc. Toni Plucinik, signal intelligence analyst, Reception and Holding Platoon, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade.

Deemed Grate Patrol, the Feed the Homeless in D.C. program happens every fourth Monday of each month. Grate Patrol began in the mid-80ís as a mobile meal program to bring evening meals and fellowship to homeless individuals living on the streets of Washington. BOSS prepares 150 sack meals and BOSS volunteers drive to the Salvation Armyís Grate Patrol where drivers assist in distributing the sack meal within the Washington Area.

ì We went to D.C. and we gave out sack lunches and talked with them. Some were real nice to talk to,î said Spc. Nancy Gonzalez, installation BOSS president and member of the 704th MI Brigade.

ìThe Salvation Army escorted us near the Capitol and the Washington Monument area where there are a lot of homeless. The homeless were asking for gloves and blankets, but unfortunately we did not have any to give them,î said Gonzalez. ìI think the next thing we will try to do for them will be a blanket and glove drive.î

Brigade Commander looks to 2003

by Col. Marcus A. Kuiper
704th MI Brigade commander

Happy Holidays and seasonís greetings to all of you. Along with my family, I extend best wishes to you and your loved ones this holiday season, and our hopes that you all have a joyous, safe and prosperous New Year.

To our brigade soldiers and civilians deployed this holiday period, we keep you in our hearts, and our prayers, knowing that your missions in support of the Global War on Terrorism are critical to our brigade, the Army, and the nation. You have made a difference, and thanks for a job well done.

2002 has been a great year in many respects. For me, it marked the highlight of my military career - taking command of this outstanding brigade. My thanks to everyone for your hard work, motivation, and inspiration during these past five months of command. As a brigade, we have shared in many successful missions and our support to the Global War on Terrorism has been tremendous. From ìhere and everywhere,î each soldier and civilian has contributed to the fight.

2003 will also no doubt be a great year. Our support of the Global War on Terrorism will continue, and I expect our brigadeís role to expand, from our support to NSA, to throughout the world.

One of the brigadeís top priorities as we begin the new year will be the installation and operations of the Information Dominance Center ñ East to support the Army, INSCOM, and NSA with multidimensional intelligence capabilities. This initiative, coupled with our ongoing transformation to better support mission requirements, will set the stage for our continued success in 2003.

Another of our top priorities for 2003 will be continued preparation for a possible war with Iraq.

I pray for peace, and I hope that the UN resolutions are implemented successfully, but, as we have seen many times before, Iraq has a terrible track record when it comes to inspections and compliance. But I know, and am confident that, if Iraq does not comply with the resolutions, our brigade is ready. We are trained, mentally and physically strong, and prepared for whatever new missions this possible conflict may bring.

Many of you will be taking a well deserved leave this holiday period, relaxing at home, or visiting family and friends. At home, or as you travel, remember safety - if you are driving, take frequent rests, and prepare for winter storms by carrying emergency supplies in your car. The traffic will be heavy, and slick road conditions could make driving very dangerous. And remember, donít drink and drive - use a designated driver, and do your part to make sure no one drives after they have been drinking.

2003 will be a great year ñ I want you back alive and ready for whatever missions our brigade may face.

HERE AND EVERYWHERE

Veterans Day commemorates Armistice signing, honors all veterans

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) ñ I have to confess that before I joined the Army I was one of those people who always got Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Labor Day mixed up. I knew that the Jerry Lewis Telethon was always held during one of them, but I had a hard time remembering which was which.

All of that changed for me with my first big assignment as a brand new Army Journalist in Washington, D.C., in November of 1989 when I met Gilmer T. Carter and his buddies.

Carter was 93 years old when we met at Arlington Cemetery. He was the national commander of the Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc., and it was his organizationís turn to conduct the Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington. Responsibility for the ceremony rotates between more than 18 veteran organizations, and because of the average age of World War I veterans, everyone knew that this would be their last opportunity to host the ceremony that was originally created to honor those veterans of ìthe war to end all wars.î

Ninety-three years of life had taken its toll on Carterís body, but his mind remained as sharp as a tack as he explained the importance of the Nov. 11. He was very clear as he recalled to me the incredible joy that he felt when he heard of the signing of the Armistice on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month back in 1918-the exact time the document was signed that ended World War I.

Even though 71 years had passed, his eyes still filled with tears as he spoke of it. ìThis day will always be ëArmistice Dayí to me,î he said. ìWhen I heard the Armistice had been signed, it was the best news I had ever heard.î

Three years after the signing of the Armistice, World War I veterans gathered for a ceremony at Arlington Cemetery to bury the remains of an unknown American soldier at the spot now known as the Tomb of the Unknowns, and Carter was there. In 1918 he was just a spectator, but in 1989 he laid the wreath at the tomb and you could see the importance of the event in his face.

All of his buddies were equally proud to take part in the event. Orval M. Hooten, Lewis E. Watson, H. Louis Brooks, and John Pavlik each took part in the event, and each left a lasting impression on me.

Perhaps the most poignant moment of the day came when Pavlik, the youngest of the group at 89, stood in front of a packed Arlington Amphitheater with tears streaming down his face and recited the poem ìFlanders Fields,î from memory.

It seemed as if he was speaking to me as he quoted the lines, ìTake up our quarrel with the foe. To you from fading hands we throw, the torch be yours to hold it high.î

I had heard the poem before, but until that moment I never really got it. Our veterans have done their part, and now itís our turn to carry the torch.

Of the 4,734,991 Americans who took part in World War I, about 100,000 were still alive when I did my story in 1989. Today, that number is down to an estimate of barely more than 500 doughboys, and all five of my buddies from 1989 have passed away. The oldest surviving veteran is 116 years old, and the average age is over 110.

Armistice Day officially became Veterans Day following World War II when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation that Nov. 11 should honor veterans of all wars. Although the name of the holiday has changed, it remains the only national holiday that commemorates an exact moment in time-the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I.

As for me, at 11 a.m. on Monday Nov. 11, you can be assured that Iíll be thinking of my doughboy buddies and the lesson they taught me back in 1989. Never again will confuse Veterans with any other day.

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Commander
704th MI BDE
ATTN: IAMS-PAO (Editor, The Voice)
Fort Meade, MD 20755-5930
DSN 622-0173
Commercial (301) 677-0173

U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command
704th Military Intelligence Brigade

Commander
Col. Marcus A. Kuiper

Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Major Randy Wilson

Public Affairs Officer
Ben Wigney

Public Affairs NCOIC / Editor
Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt

Graphic Artist
Sgt. Anishka Forbes

704th MI Brigade Mission

The 704th Military Intelligence Brigade conducts continuous full-spectrum signals intelligence, computer network and information security operations directly, and through NSA to satisfy National, Joint, Combined and Army information superiority requirements.

Focus

To ensure mission accomplishment in an ethical environment while providing opportunities for individual professional growth and satisfaction, we must have:
-Competent and caring leaders,
-Well trained and fit soldiers,
-Efficient, effective unit operations,
-Unit cohesion and pride,
-Planned, orderly growth and change.

Saddam Hussein: In His Very Own Words

For years, Saddam Hussein and his regime have used state-controlled media in Iraq to spread lies, and threaten his neighbors and the world. Below is a sampling of quotes from Saddam and the Iraqi media - keyed to significant events - showing a pattern of threats stretching back more then a decade

compiled by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt from
DoD internet sources
Editor, The Voice

courtesy photo

The Gulf War, February 1991

"We will chase (Americans) to every corner at all times. No high tower of steel will protect them against the fire of truth.î
Saddam Hussein, Baghdad Radio, February 8, 1991

ì(America) will not be excluded from the operations and explosions of the Arab and Muslim mujahidin and all the honest strugglers in the world.î
Iraq News Agency, January 30, 1991 (State-controlled)

ìWhat remains for Bush and his accomplices in crime is to understand that they are personally responsible for their crime. The Iraqi people will pursue them for this crime, even if they leave office and disappear into oblivion. There is no doubt they will understand what we mean if they know what revenge means to the Arabs.î
Baghdad Radio, February 6, 1991 (State-controlled)

ìEvery Iraqi child, woman, and old man knows how to take revenge...They will avenge the pure blood that has been shed no matter how long it takes.î
Baghdad Domestic Service, February 15, 1991 (State-controlled)

Iraq Masses Troops Against Kuwait, October 1994

"Does (America) realize the meaning of every Iraqi becoming a missile that can cross to countries and cities?î
Saddam Hussein, September 29, 1994

ìWhen peoples reach the verge of collective death, they will be able to spread death to all...î *Al-Jumhuriyah, October 4, 1994 (State-controlled newspaper)î*

ìOur striking arm will reach (America, Britain and Saudi Arabia) before they know what hit them.î
Al-Qadisiyah, October 6, 1994 (State-controlled newspaper)

ìOne chemical weapon fired in a moment of despair could cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands.î
Al-Quds al-Arabi, October 12, 1994 (State-controlled newspaper)

Release of UNSCOM Report, April 10, 1995

"Although Iraqís options are limited, they exist...Iraqís present state is that of a wounded tiger. Its blow could be painful, even if it is the last blow...î
Al-Quds Al-íArabi, June 9, 1995 (State-controlled newspaper)

Khobar Towers Bombing, June 25, 1996

"(The U.S.) should send more coffins to Saudi Arabia, because no one can guess what the future has in store.î
Saddam Hussein, Iraqi Radio, June 27, 1996

Operation Desert Fox, December 1998

"If (other Arab nations) persist on pursuing their wrongful path, then we should ó or rather we must ó place the swords of jihad on their necks...î
Saddam Hussein, January 5, 1999

"Oh sons of Arabs and the Arab Gulf, rebel against the foreigner...Take revenge for your dignity, holy places, security, interests and exalted values.î
Saddam Hussein, January 5, 1999

ì(Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti) blood will light torches, grow aromatic plants, and water the tree of freedom, resistance and victory. î
Saddam Hussein, Iraqi Radio, January 26, 1999

"Whoever continues to be involved in a despicable aggressive war against the people of Iraq as a subservient party must realize that this aggressive act has a dear price.î
Saddam Hussein, February 16, 1999

"What is required now is to deal strong blows to U.S. and British interests. These blows should be strong enough to make them feel that their interests are indeed threatened not only by words but also in deeds.î
Al-Qadisiyah, February 27, 1999 (State-controlled newspaper)

U.S.S. Cole Bombing, October 12, 2000

"(Iraqis) should intensify struggle and jihad in all fields and by all means...î
Iraq TV, October 22, 2000 (State-controlled)

The Attacks of September 11

"The United States reaps the thorns its rulers have planted in the world.î
Saddam Hussein, September 12, 2001

"The real perpetrators (of September 11) are within the collapsed buildings.î
*Alif-Ba, September 11, 2002 (State-controlled newspaper)*î

ì(September 11 was) Godís punishment.î
Al-Iktisadi, September 11, 2002 (State-controlled newspaper)

ìIf the attacks of September 11 cost the lives of 3,000 civilians, how much will the size of losses in 50 states within 100 cities if it were attacked in the same way in which New York and Washington were? What would happen if hundreds of planes attacked American cities?î
Al-Rafidayn, September 11, 2002 (State-controlled newspaper)

ìThe simple truth (about September 11) is that America burned itself and now tries to burn the world.î
Alif-Ba, September 11, 2002 (State-controlled magazine)

ìIt is possible to turn to biological attack, where a small can, not bigger than the size of a hand, can be used to release viruses that affect everything...î
Babil, September 20, 2001 (State-controlled newspaper)

ìThe United States must get a taste of its own poison...î
Babil, October 8, 2001

Chaplainís Corner: When Things go Wrong

by Maj. David Causey
Brigade Chaplain

Sometimes the greatest of our accomplishments are born out of disappointment, failure and obstacles at the worst possible place and time. This was the case in the lives of a Catholic priest named Joseph Mohr and a town schoolmaster and organist, Frans Gruber, in 1818 near Salzburg, Austria.

Several weeks before the annual Christmas Eve Mass, the church organ broke down. What was Father Mohr going to do? There were no suitable Christmas songs at that time that could be sung without organ accompaniment and he did not want to disappoint his congregation. Father Mohr felt compelled to write his own. With the baptism of a newborn infant still fresh on his mind, Father Mohr sat down and wrote out the words of a Christmas song which presented the simplicity of Christís birth.

Father Mohr quickly took his words to his friend Frans Gruber, who read them and exclaimed, ìFriend Mohr, you have found it - the perfect song - God be praised!î Gruber composed a simple, haunting tune that could be played on guitar or sung *acappella.*

The song was played at the Christmas Eve mass and became an instant success. Neither Mohr nor Gruber ever intended their song for anyone outside of their mountain village. Yet it rapidly spread across Europe through the performances of folk singers and quartets. It reached the U.S. in 1839 and was translated in 1863. No other Christmas carol has touched the hearts of so many.

Historian Kenneth Osbeck writes, ìThe carol is presently sung in all of the major languages of the world and is a universal favorite wherever songs of the Christmas message are sungî (*101 Hymn Stories*, p. 222).

Who would have ever thought that something as good and enduring as *ìSilent Night, Holy Night,î* could have come from a broken organ? Romans 8:28 tells us, ìGod works all things together for good, for those who love Him, for those who are called according to His purpose.î

704th Unit Ministry Team at Ft.Meade

Contemporary Protestant Worship Service
Cavalry Chapel, Corner of 6th Cavalry & Simmons
Sundays, 1045

704th Unit Ministry Team
ìThe God Squadî
Chaplain (Maj.) David Causey (301)677-7513
Spc. Robert Apger (301)677-7521
Bldg. 9828, Rm. 152

743rd MI at Buckley Air Force Base

Religious Services
Protestant
Sunday Worship, 1000 in Mod #1, Bldg. #T-10
Singles Wednesday Bible Study, 1700 in Mod#1 Bldg. #T-10
Wednesday Bible Study in ADF, 1800 in ADF Conference Room C
Catholic
Saturday Confession, 1430 in MOD #1, Bldg. #T-10
Saturday Mass, 1500 at MOD #1, Bldg. #T-10

743rd On-Site Chaplain
Chaplain (LTC) Steven Hess
(303)677-6411
Offices Located In:
Mod #1, Bldg. #T-10 & Rm. 1356-A in ADF

704th Bible Study

Every Wednesday, 1130-1245
At the 741st MI Battalion
Conference Room
Free Anthonyís Pizza and Soft Drinks

Chaplain Activities

Spiritual Fitness Training--Skiing at Liberty Mountain
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2003
Time: Meet at Brigade Conference Room, 0800
Cost: No cost to soldiers/family members

743rd MI Battalion celebrates Veteransí Day in Denver

courtesy photos

Paintball Excursion trains 741st in CTT

by Sgt. Juazzelyn A. Barrera
741st MI Battalion

They say that war is usually told from the victorís point of view.

For that reason, a Company C, 741st Military Intelligence Battalion soldier has been assigned to tell his story.

Two companies from the 741st MI Battalion set out to do something which had never been done before. Headquarters and Operations Company and Company C became the first companies in the 704th MI Brigade to use a paintball excursion as a leader training exercise.

The idea was born out of need for realistic Common Task Testing situations. Many platoon sergeants thought that it would give soldiers a better understanding of the tasks they are to perform for CTT. HOC used a paintball scenario to train at the platoon level, but it had never been utilized at a company level.

ì We had to coordinate with a reserve and guard component for the Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINCGARS), and bring together the classes that would need to be taught prior to Sergeantís Time Training,î said Capt. Steven Swingle, commander of HOC.

Some of the classes taught by HOC noncommissioned officers were to conduct movement techniques by platoon, prepare a platoon sector sketch, move under direct fire, handle enemy personnel and equipment, and reorganize a platoon following enemy contact while in the defense. Company C NCOs taught classes such as perform voice communications, report information of potential intelligence value and integrate risk management in a platoon mission. In all, 11 tasks were taught and utilized from the CTT manual for this training.

The leader training exercise was conducted in three phases with safety as the number one priority. In the first phase, Company C was in the offensive with the mission of penetrating the perimeter of a position set up by HOC. The soldiers of Company C planned their attack, which consisted of sending personnel to recon the area, then to move the troops in a three-sided attack. This plan was thwarted when the lines of communication were broken.

ìOnce the lines of communication were broken, and the momentum for the attack lost, the mission was destroyed,î stated an unidentified soldier from Company C.

ìThe soldiers learned the importance of team work, because the team that had the most knowledge of the battlefield had the upper hand. They (HOC) were able to plan better and react better having been on defense first,î said Capt. Kenneth Redman, commander of Company C.

photo by Sgt. Jessica Phillips

Capt. Kenneth Redman, commander, Company C, 741st Military Intelligence Battalion, is taken into custody by members of the HOC during a paintball excursion at a leader training exercise. The exercise gave soldiers realistic Common Task Training.

In the second phase of the training, the roles were reversed. Company C was in the defensive posture and HOC was the aggressor. Having seen the mistakes made by Company C, the leaders in HOC put what they learned about how to penetrate the perimeter into use.

ìClearly, HOC won this battle,î Swingle said.

In the third and final phase of training the two companies came together to play capture the flag. The mission was to capture the company guidon from the other company and bring it back to their own area without their guidon being captured. The company that accomplished this mission firstówon.

ìThere was no clear winner on this mission,î said Capt. Redman. ìThere was a discrepancy on who actually won. I must say that what really mattered is that these soldiers walked away having a good time, plus they learned something along the way. î

Volunteering...Good for you, Good for them

by Spc. Nathan Provence
743rd MI Battalion

Booker T. Washington once said, ìIf you want to lift up yourself, lift up someone else.î

This statement exemplifies what volunteering can do for a soldier. Volunteering is one of the most rewarding activities a person can participate in. Whether it is as simple as going to a nursing home just to say ìhelloî or as involved as organizing an event to support your favorite charity, the act of volunteering is a worthwhile experience. A soldier can and will receive many tangible and, more importantly, intangible rewards through the act of volunteering.

There are many opportunities to volunteer in the Denver and Aurora metropolitan areas. As with most major cities, Denver and its surrounding areas are filled with a variety of nationally known volunteer organizations. These include the American Red Cross, American Cancer Society and the American Heart and Lung Association just to name a few, but what makes this area unique are the volunteer organizations not known at the national level. These organizations range from the appreciation of various art forms to the mentorship of young children.

Many volunteer organizations are heavily involved with family assistance. An organization called Family and Community Education and Support works with families in their home as a parent aide for children three to 18 months. Teams of staff and volunteers also instruct parents in a seven-point project for high-risk teens, their parents and siblings. Their purpose is to assist parents in their efforts to build safe and emotionally healthy families for themselves and their children while preventing child abuse and neglect. Another family oriented volunteer opportunity is available from an organization entitled Families Connecting for Kids - The Adoption Exchange. Their purpose is to provide family-focused services to individuals living with HIV who are parenting minor children. Opportunities in this organization include providing rest and relaxation for the parents; transportation; assistance with errands, housecleaning and cooking. They are also matched with a parent or child as a support person.

Aside from the many family oriented volunteering, Denver has an organization called Summer Scholars. This association is a year-round community-based literacy program for elementary students in Denver who are below grade level in reading and at risk of school failure. Summer Scholars attacks poverty and crime by promoting literacy and academic achievement in a safe, stimulating environment. As an example of their success, the program, which is professionally evaluated and the outcomes measured, reported that 81% of last yearís students in the summer program made significant gains in reading skills. This is a testament to the one-on-one in-school and after-school programs that play a colossal role in the development of a child.

Many types of recognition can be achieved through volunteering, but is not limited to the organization or the community located therein. Our Army recognizes the feat of volunteering through the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. The MOVSM is given to a soldier that completes at least 100 hours of volunteer work. This award not only adds additional appearance to the service uniform, but is also worth 15 promotion points in the pursuit of Sergeant and Staff Sergeant.

Denver and its surrounding areas offer many gratifying opportunities to extend a helping hand. The reward is evident in the faces of the person you are visiting, or in the child knowing that he or she has a friend. As a sergeant and a leader, volunteering sets a solid example.

Brigade honors Soldiers who Stay

by Sgt. 1st Class Willene Orr
Brigade Reenlistment

It is no secret soldiers are faced with complex challenges from every arena in the Intelligence community as our Nation continues to wage the global war on terrorism in the United States and abroad. They expend long hours around the clock performing missions and conducting training while simultaneously supporting day-to-day operational unit requirements. As stated in the 704th Military Intelligence Brigadeís Vision Statement, our soldiers comprise the premier Army team that provides full-spectrum signals intelligence and operational support to warfighters and national command authorities ìHere and Everywhere!î They perform exceptionally well and do so with dignity, pride and professionalism. They serve in the war-torn regions of Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo. They serve around the globe while spending months away for families and loved ones. All too often, we do not always take time to honor our soldiers for the many sacrifices they make. There is nothing more rewarding than to see them reenlist and ìStay Army!î

Recently, the 704th MI Brigade hosted its quarterly Retention Luncheon on November 8, 2002, to honor our military men and women for their continued service. The luncheon is one of many reenlistment promotional incentives the brigade incorporates to pay tribute and extend appreciation to our soldiers. The honorees were given a well-balanced meal at no cost to them. They were treated to four varieties of pizza, salad with all the trimmings, hot wings, dessert and beverages. To uphold a long-standing Army tradition, the youngest honoree, Spc. Angela Acosta, logistics specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 704th MI Brigade, sliced the first piece of cake.

In addition, on behalf of Col. Marcus Kuiper, commander, 704th MI Brigade, special remarks were given by Lt. Col. Anthony Wenger, deputy commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Randy Wilson, command sergeant major, both from the 704th MI Brigade. Later, all the honorees were given the opportunity to explain why they reenlisted. Reasons were varied but meaningful. One soldier, Spc. Keisha Rivers of Company B, 741st MI Battalion, stated ìI planned to separate from the military, but realized I was not ready. I did not have a resume ready, and I had rent and a car note to pay. I decided the best option for me was to reenlist.î

Another soldier, Staff Sgt. Amber Weisbecker of Detachment Meade, 742nd MI Battalion, said, ìI was originally going to separate from the Army as well. But when I got accepted to work with Detachment Meade, my outlook changed and I got a whole new perspective on the military due to some of the missions our unit performs. I also received $20,000.00 and an opportunity to help keep our Nation safe as we fight the war on terrorism.î

Staff Sgt. Curtis Zimmerman, also assigned to Detachment Meade, shared the same sentiments as Weisbecker. Zimmermanís wife, Taiari Zimmerman, who also serves in the military, received the spouseís Certificate of Appreciation.

Afterwards, all the honorees were presented the 704th MI Brigade Retention Coin of Excellence by Wenger and Wilson. The highlight for most of the soldiers was the door prizes which varied from free Muvico tickets to Remomo CafÈ Italia and Jillianís gift certificates. The prizes were donated on behalf of HHC, 704th MI Brigade Family Readiness Group. All in all, the luncheon was a great success for our soldiers and will be a standard event to pay tribute to those who renew their contracts and ìStay Army. î

Special recognition is extended to Lt. Col. Stephen Stewart, commander, 742nd MI Battalion and the 742nd MI Battalion for the use of their facilities and their assistance in setting up. Also, special thanks are extended to the 1st Sgt. Bruce Eike, Company A, 742nd MI Battalion, Sgt. Heather George, HHC, 704th MI Brigade, Sgt. Patrick Crouch, HHC 704th MI Brigade, Sgt. Donald Cogdill, Company A, 742nd MI Battalion, and all the Command Retention Teams for their assistance and contributions.

The next brigade retention luncheon is scheduled for January 2003. See your career counselor for more details. As always, ìItís an HonorÖitís an Honor to Serve.î

The 704TH Retention Team

704th MI Brigade
Sgt. 1st Class Willene Orr
(301) 677-0164

741st MI Battalion
Sgt. 1st Class Kirkland K. Thomas
(310) 677-0157

742nd MI Battalion
Staff Sgt. Joseph Collins, Jr.
(301) 677-0117

743rd MI Battalion
Staff Sgt. Shelly R. Demetrelis
(303) 677-5048

News from around the 704th

Hopewell, new commander of HOC

photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt

Capt. Peter Hopewell took command of Headquarters and Operations Company, 741st Military Intelligence Battalion, 704th MI Brigade, on November 15, 2002. Hopewell took command from outgoing commander Capt. Steven Swingle. Hopewell was commissioned into the Army in 1995 as a Field Artillery officer. Hopewell branch transferred to MI in 2000, and was sent to Fort Huachuca for the MI Officer Transition Course. In April 2002, Hopewell was selected as the officer-in-charge of a National Intelligence Support Team and commanded the detachment when it deployed to Qatar and Yemen in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In June, he returned and worked as the Central Command plans officer for Military Integration. Hopewell is a native of Richmond, Va., and is accompanied by his wife Liz and son, Jack.

McGrew takes over ìThe Bestî

photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt

Sgt. 1st Class Kathy McGrew took over responsibilities as the first sergeant of Company A, 741st Military Intelligence Battalion, 704th MI Brigade on November 14, 2002. McGrew took responsibility of the company from 1st Sgt. Cynthia Wood. McGrew is a native of Amarillo, Texas, and completed Basic Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., in 1987. McGrew is a signal intelligence analyst and was previously assigned as an analyst and platoon sergeant of Company C, 741st MI Battalion, working at the National Security Agency. Prior to serving here, McGrew served as an analyst and squad leader at Field Station in San Antonio, Texas, and as a drill sergeant at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. McGrew is accompanied by her husband Capt. Brian McGrew and her son Johnathan.

Heritage celebration month: Cycle of Denial?

by Sgt. 1st Class Alicia Whittington
Brigade Equal Opportunity Advisor

In the United States, our society stands on the creed: Land of the free and home of the brave. It is with these words that I ask arenít we all Americans?

On countless occasions while serving as an equal opportunity advisor I have been asked why canít we all just be Americans? Why do we have all these hyphenations?

To those who ask this question, I have one for you. Why not? Is it denying someoneís right to be who they really are by forcing someone to conform to the norm? Is it perpetuating a cycle that started many years ago with our ancestors when they first settled or arrived in the United States?

It is through our heritage and our culture that we develop the values and beliefs to become who we are and what we represent as a person. We share it with our friends and family, and we pass it down from generation to generation.

When our ancestors arrived in the United States, all faced forms of discrimination because they were different. They were disliked by the same people who had faced that same discrimination.

Our ancestors, like those before them, were faced with the dilemma to conform to fit in or continue to be an outcast. In many cases, that was exactly what they did. They forgot the languages and traditions that enriched their lives and made them who they were as individuals.

Today I have to ask those who repeatedly say we are all Americans, and we have no room for hyphenations. Why do we have no room?

We are all Americans fighting for the same thing. The wonderful thing we strive to protect and the reasons our ancestors immigrated here in the first place.

That thing is the promise of a better future for us and for our children. Itís the promise of freedom of choice and freedom from persecution.

If someone chooses to maintain their individual identity, does that make them any less of an American? Or, does it make them an American who supports and defends the constitution of these United States, the same constitution that guarantees them that right?

If we deny this right to others, are we denying ourselves the opportunity to truly be free? Are we denying ourselves the opportunity to embrace the heritage and culture we have forgotten, because our ancestors many years ago assimilated to fit in?

Do we want to perpetuate this same cycle and demand others continue to deny who they are and were they came from? After all, isnít that what we are fighting for, the right to be who we are?

As a country, we celebrate eight heritage month celebrations throughout the year. These heritage celebrations represent groups of people, who in the past have been discriminated against and were required to conform to what was then considered the societal norm.

These observances represent a time for us to go back and heal the wounds inflicted through the demand to conform and assimilate.

It is an opportunity to share with everyone the enrichment of the heritage that different Americans embrace. It is also a time to find out who we are and reclaim the heritage our ancestors came here to preserve.

Different does not mean wrong. It means exactly that, different people sharing a common goal, to be free.

Observances are not for those of that heritage or culture, but for those who are not.

It is an opportunity to learn about those who are different. If we learn about people different from ourselves we just might find that we are not so different at all.

So, for those who might say we should just be Americans and we have no room for all these hyphenations, ask yourself this: is it because this is what you have been taught?

In order to fit in you must give up the heritage and culture that is different. Or just maybe it is because you donít know anything different.

In order to affect change we must break perpetuating cycles that are destructive. Is this one of those cycles we need to break?

If you attend one of the eight observances whether it is Black History Month, Native American Heritage Month or Womenís History month, what is the worst thing that will happen?

Maybe, you might learn something you didnít know before. Maybe you might find out we share many of the same values, attitudes and beliefs. Or just maybe you will gain some insight that will help us better understand each other and bring us closer together as people.

Princess of Chickasaw Tribe gives up Crown for her Country

by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt
Editor, The Voice

A 704th Military Intelligence Brigade soldier has given up her crown as head princess of the Chickasaw tribe to defend the country that she loves.

ìI was crowned head princess on October 3, 2001. I handed down the crown just before joining the Army in February 2002. As princess, I am a representative of our tribe for all national and international events,î said Pvt. Rebecca Johnson, electronic intelligence analyst attached to the Reception and Holding Platoon, 704th MI Brigade.

ìIíve held the crown twice with my tribe. Iíve also held one tribal council crown and four state crowns. I like to make my people look good. I donít do it to improve myself, but to give kids someone to look up to,î said Johnson.

Johnson is a 21 year old native of Ada, Okla., and she has just arrived at Fort Meade, Md., from Advanced Individual Training in Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

ìThe reason I enlisted in the Army is because our people always defend our family and our country,î said Johnson. ìWe are always the first one to fight and defend what we love. Most Indians are that way. We are very protective people.î

ìSomeday, I want to compete in the Miss Indian U.S.A. pageant in Washington. That way I not only represent the Chickasaw tribe, but I can also represent the Army,î said Johnson.

The Chickasaw tribe was formed in 1907 and it is from the southeastern part of the U.S. The tribe is composed of its own government with a Constitution and a Bill of Rights. The motto of the tribe is ìUnconquered and Unconquerable.î The language of the tribe is Chickasaw and the elders of the tribe still speak it today.

ìI used to speak the language somewhat fluently, but I lost a lot by moving around when I was a kid. I speak the language on the grounds, because the elders only understand that language,î said Johnson.

Another tradition of the tribe is dance. Johnson is part of the Itsi clan, or tree clan. The stomp dance is their ceremonial dance. The clan performs the Sinte Hitha, or snake dance, to close the ceremony.

ìAll of us form a circle one behind the other until we coil like a snake. This is the dance that symbolizes the four directions and the winds of change.î

Excelling in her tribe as princess has not been Johnsonís only goal, she has made a lot of goals for herself since she has been here.

ìIím working toward a double major in chemistry and biology,î said Johnson. ìIím planning on becoming a mentor at a local elementary school, and I am a co-leader for Girl Scout Troop 1269.î

photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt
Pvt. Rebecca Johnson, electronic intelligence analyst with the Reception and Holding Platoon, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade, handed down her crown as head princess of the Chickasaw tribe to enlist in the U.S. Army. She has held the crown twice for the tribe.

Around the Army

Actor comedian visits troops in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (Army News Service) ñ Robin Williams, comedian, movie star, TV star, comedy recording artist and theater star, visited Operation Enduring Freedom troops at Kandahar Airfield on a United Services Organization sponsored visit.

He spent most of the day touring the installation and interacting with service members.

ìBasically, I did not want people to forget the troops in Afghanistan and, at the same time, I wanted troops to know the people at home still care about them,î Williams said.

Although the trip was his first time visiting troops with the USO, he has a history of giving and has devoted much of his energy doing work for charities like ìComic Relief,î an annual benefit to aid the homeless.

ìI always wanted to come over, but things never worked out before,î Williams said. ìIraq has been getting a lot of the focus lately. I wanted people to know that we already have soldiers at war doing their jobs in Afghanistan. The Taliban and al-Qaeda threat is still illuminating.î

His other talents include impersonation, doing strange voices and improvisation. These talents were put to work during his visit with the troops, as he mimicked everything from Hispanic accents to actor Jack Nicholson.

ìI just came to give people a good laugh and say ëhey,íî Williams said. ìI was very impressed with the extraordinary people here ñ the men who left wives behind, the women who left their families and the reservists who left jobs and families.î

One of the troopsí favorite movies with Williams is ìGood Morning, Vietnam,î released in 1987, where he gave a comic performance as real-life U.S. Forcesí disc jockey Adrian Cronauer. The film established him as a screen star and earned him the first of three Oscar nominations.

photo by Spc. Alfredo Jimenez Jr.

Actor and comedian Robin Williams signs autographs for Operation Enduring Freedom troops at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan. He visited the troops on a United Services Organization sponsored visit.

ì We were watching one of his movies in the tent when we found out he was coming,î said Spc. Valerie Day, chemical equipment repair, 488th Quartermaster Company. ìI was so excited. I have been watching his movies since I was little. He has always been an idol of mine.î

Williams tirelessly shook hands, took pictures and signed every autograph requested. A 50-minute autograph session, scheduled at the dining facility, turned into four hours, because Williams refused to leave until every soldier got his turn with him.

ìIt was worth the wait,î Day said. ìIt totally boosted my morale. This place can be somewhat depressing to an extent, being so far from home.

Service-members from all branches lined up all day to meet Williams.

ì With all the diverse services here, there is a community within a lot of little communities,î Williams said. ìDifferent services that share a unity of purpose and all work together to accomplish the same goal.î

Williams continued his USO tour with a trip to Rome.

Army starts Digital Photo Program with DAPMIS

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) ó The Department of the Armyís Photograph Management Information System, or DAPMIS, has became operational.

As of Sept. 19, 2,902 official DA photos had been submitted via the new system. Only 42 of those photos have been rejected due to resolution problems.

DAPMIS, a web-enabled, e-business system, provides a digital means for Army photo labs to electronically transmit official military photographs for promotion board consideration, said DAPMIS coordinator Ken Washington of the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command.†

PERSCOM recently issued a message to the field outlining procedures. The normal procedure is for photo labs to digitally upload military photographs to a central repository. DAPMISí goal is to have a full repository of digital photos by Dec. 31, 2003. This applies to staff sergeants and above, chief warrant officers 2 and above, and first lieutenants to colonels.

For the present, hard-copy photos will still be forwarded to a soldierís servicing personnel services battalion or military personnel office as well. This process will be eliminated once the Army Selection Board System is fully implemented and career managers have the capability to display photos from the DAPMIS repository.

ìThe DAPMIS system is the Army solution for automating the DA photo process. This system supports all soldiers, active and reserve components, and is a great aid to the Army Selection Board System, career management activities and commanders,î Washington said.

Washington added that photo labs will give first priority for digital photographs to soldiers in zones of consideration for any upcoming centralized selection board.

The PERSCOM message notes an important change to photo lab procedures, noting that photo lab technicians will now concentrate solely on taking photos rather than also inspecting a soldierís uniform to ensure proper wear.

Soldiers will be able to review their photos via their AKO accounts. The DAPMIS site is available via the ìWhatís Newî area of AKO. Soldiers will have three work days to either accept or reject the photo taken; DAPMIS will automatically accept any photo taken as the official photo of record if the soldier does not verify it within the three-day limit.

Soldiers will be required to inform their unit commanders if they reject their photo, and to make arrangements to have the photo retaken.

Soldiers who are currently deployed will have their ìhard copyî photos scanned into the DAPMIS system.

ìDAPMIS will save soldiers time because they will no longer have to visit the personnel office to deliver their photo,î said Sgt. Maj. Freddie Davis in the Chief Information Office at the Pentagon.

Around the Army

Female MPs join the Infantry on Front Line

KHOWST, Afghanistan (Army News Service) ñ To this day, the U.S. military has its doors closed to women performing combat arms duties like infantry and cavalry.

Nevertheless, three female soldiers in southeastern Afghanistan are breaking barriers as military police. Sgt. Nicola Hall, Cpl. Jill Osowski and Sgt. Stephanie Blazo have all recently accompanied infantrymen to complete MP missions.

Hall is the first woman to accompany the infantry in combat operations in theatre.

ì Taking females out on missions was new to the infantrymen,î said Hall, 21st Military Police Company, Fort Bragg, N.C.

The female MPs assist infantrymen when Afghan women are searched.

ìItís tough work, what they do,î said Osowski, 972nd Military Police Company, Massachusetts National Guard, Melrose, Mass. ìItís a privilege to do it with them.î

The three travel with the men on almost every mission and have gained a new perspective on an infantrymanís work.

ìI like doing what the guys do,î said Blazo, 972nd MP Co. ìI get a better appreciation of their job.î

Although working with infantrymen can be fun, Osowski said, she also stressed that the MPs take their job seriously and play hard.

ì You have to make sure youíre in good physical condition,î said Osowski, from Chicopee, Mass. ìOn my last mission, we walked 18 clicks (kilometers) with all of my gear on.î

Hall agreed with Osowski.

ìIím learning what grunts do,î said Hall. ìThey learn what I do. As MPs, we search people and look for weapons. Itís our SOP (standard operating procedure). I never thought we would be walking for hours or be on the front.î

ìTheyíve (82nd Airborne soldiers) been nothing but respectful to us,î she continued. ìAs long as you walk and carry your own weight, youíre respected.î

photo by Sgt. Reeba Critser

Sgt. Nicola Hall, 21st Military Police Company, Fort Bragg, N.C., and Cpl. Jill Osowski, 972nd MP Co., Massachusetts National Guard, observe a vehicle drive by their perimeter during a presence patrol in Southeastern Agfhanistan. They are two of the three female MPs conducting missions with infantry patrols in Afghanistan.

Because Afghanistan is a male-dominated country, the trio receives a lot of attention when they conduct missions.

ìThe men and kids are shocked to see us carry a weapon,î said Blazo, from Revere, Mass. ìBut we havenít had trouble with them so far. î

The need for women in Afghanistan combat operations has recently risen.

ìIím not surprised that theyíve (82nd Airborne) using females,î Hall said. ìFemales play a bigger part in combat now. In Israel, women are strapping bomb on themselves ñ suicide bombers. Itís come to be true here.î

For the last two months, Hall was the only female performing searches on Afghan women. She was the MP that discovered Afghan women hiding weapons under their burkas last month. Since then, Osowski and Blazo have joined her from Uzbekistan.

ì Weíre invading their housed and searching persons,î Osowski said. ìThe males are not expecting the women to be searched. So, weíre sending out the message that the behavior will not be tolerated.î

Although these women are pioneers in their field, none of them want to pursue the option of women in the combat military occupational specialties.

ìItís difficult, vigorous, mentally stressful,î Hall said. ìI know as females that we can do it. But for cohesion, itís not good. Cohesion is what makes the Army click. Itís not womenís libóIím just here doing my job.î

Interactive Web Response System tracks OERs

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) ñ Personnel staff officers, rating officials and individual officers have a new capability to check to see if efficiency reports have arrived at the U.S. Army Personnel Command.

The Interactive Web Response System is a web-based solution that provides a list of all evaluation reports completed since Oct. 1, 1997, for a rated officer and identifies the date each was received at PERSCOM.

IWRS also allows users to view specific administrative information from each report. Unit S-1s can now verify that reports have reached PERSCOM or the last date of a report before initiating a new rating period. All the staff officer has to do is enter an officerís social security number to acquire the report.

IWRS complements the currently used interactive voice response system at (703) 325-2637, or DSN, 221-2637.

Capt. Joel Prather, 1-4 Aviation Regiment, 4th Infantry Div. at Fort Hood, Texas, has used the new system and said he liked it.

ìPretty neat,î Prather said. ìItís a lot better than going through all the prompts and having to listen carefully to the telephone voice.î

IWRS is available through an American flag icon on the front page of the PERSCOM homepage in the bottom left hand corner. Users can access it with an Army Knowledge Online password.

Eventually, IWRS will have a link on AKO.

Individual officers can still access and print their entire file or completed reports through OMPF online.

The point of contact in PERSCOMís Evaluation Systems Office is Ms. Joan Freeman, (703) 325-4141 or DSN, 221-4141

Personnel staff officers, rating officials and individual officers are now able to see if efficiency reports have arrived at PERSCOM by accessing the home page of PERSCOM. An American flag icon is located in the bottom left hand corner.

photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt

The White House, in Washington, D.C., is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the United States. The White House contains 132 rooms, but only five of these--the Blue Room, East Room, Green Room, Red Room and State Dining Room--are open to public visitation.

The White House, Home of the President

by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt
Editor, The Voice

The White House, in Washington D.C. and the official residence of the president of the United States, is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the U.S.

Built between 1792 and 1800 on the worldís most famous address, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., it has been known throughout history as the Presidentís Palace, the Presidentís House and the Executive Mansion, but became known as the White House in 1901 when Theodore Roosevelt had the name engraved on his stationery.

It has been the home of every president in American history with the exception of George Washington, who approved the act that led to its construction. The White House became the first public building erected in Washington. It was designed by the Irish-American architect James Hoban, who won the $500 public architectural contest. The cornerstone was laid on October 13, 1792, and building was essentially completed in 1800, when John Adams and his family began to reside there in November.

The exterior of the White House is surrounded by landscaped lawns and gardens, which encompass its 18 acres. Numerous trees of historical interest surround the exterior.

Inside, private apartments of the president occupy the second floor of the main building, and the third floor consists chiefly of guestrooms and quarters of the staff. The ground floor is filled with cloakrooms, a china room, the kitchen and the library.

On the first floor are the formal rooms of state, which are open to the public. Among these stately rooms are the East Room, the largest room in the White House, used for state receptions and balls; the oval Blue Room, where the president receives guests at state dinners; the Red Room, in which the First Lady receives guests; the Green Room, used for informal receptions; and the State Dining Room, used for formal dinners.

courtesy photo

Martin Van Buren first used the color blue to decorate this oval-shaped room in the White House. This color choice began the tradition of the Blue Room. The Blue

Tours of the White House are currently available to school and youth groups grades one through 12 and organized military and veteran groups. Group requests may be submitted through oneís Member of Congress. These self-guided tours are scheduled from 7:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

For more information on visiting the White House, call the 24-hour visitorsí office at (202) 456-7041 or go to the official White House website at www.whitehouse.gov

Safety Brief: Christmas Safety

by Patti Shelley
Safety Officer

Christmas Trees

Many artificial trees are fire resistant. If you buy one, look for a statement specifying this protection. A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree. To check for freshness, remember: A fresh tree is green. Fresh needles are hard to pull from branches. When bent between your fingers, fresh needles do not break. The trunk of a fresh tree is sticky with resin. When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows that the tree is too dry.

Place trees away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources. Heated rooms dry out too rapidly, creating fire hazards. Keep a fire extinguisher handy in the tree area. Cut off about two inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption. Trim away branches as necessary to set the tree trunk in the base of a sturdy, water-holding stand with widespread feet. Keep the stand filled with water while the tree is indoors. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways. Use thin guy wires to secure a large tree to the walls or ceiling. These wires are almost invisible. Be sure to discard the tree well away from your home, not even with the trash until you can properly dispose of it. Remove the tree promptly if it becomes dry.

Artificial snow sprays can irritate lungs if inhaled. To avoid injury, read container labels; follow directions carefully. Decorative lights; inside or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety. Identify these by the label from an independent testing laboratory. Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard damaged sets or repair them before using. Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect them from wind damage. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations when you go to bed or leave the house. Lights could short and cause a fire. Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and any person touching a branch could be electrocuted! To avoid this danger, use colored spotlights above or beside a metallic tree, never fastened onto it! Keep ìbubblingî lights away from children. These lights with their bright colors and bubbling movement can tempt curious children to break candle-shaped lights. The resulting broken glass is dangerously sharp and allows the escape of liquid, which contains a hazardous chemical. Automatic lighting timers can be used to ensure that lights are not left on. These are available for both indoor and outdoor applications.

Holiday Cooking

Avoid loose fitting clothing when cooking such as long open sleeves, which can easily be ignited by hot burners. Never leave the kitchen unattended when something is cooking on the stove. Always turn pot handles inward to prevent small children from reaching a hot pan. Donít store items on the stovetop ñ they might catch fire. Turn off appliances after use. Donít overload electrical outlets. Check appliances for frayed or cracked wires. Do not use electrical appliances near water. Be sure the kitchen is well ventilated or keep a window cracked to help prevent the build-up of carbon monoxide from gas cooking appliances. Equip kitchen area with smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Use chafing dishes with caution.

Childrenís Toys

Never hang toys with long strings, cords, loops or ribbons in cribs or playpens where children may become entangled. Remove crib gyms from the crib once the child can pull up on hands and knees; some children have strangled when they fell on crib gyms stretched across the crib.

The law requires the following label on boxes of explosive caps producing noise above a certain level:
ì WARNING ñ Do not fire closer to the ear than one foot. Do not use indoors.
Broken toys may have dangerous points or prongs. Stuffed toys may have wires inside, which could cut or stab if exposed. Even a toy as simple as a balloon, when un-inflated or broken, is more dangerous than any other type of toy. Children should never be permitted to play with adult lawn darts or other hobby or sporting equipment that has sharp points. Arrows or darts used by children should have soft cork tips, rubber suction cups, or other protective tips intended to prevent injury. Children should be taught how to use electric toys properly.

† **General Rules for Holiday Safety**

Remember to keep all matches, lighters and candles out of the reach of children. Avoid smoking near flammable decorations. Make an emergency plan to use if a fire breaks out anywhere in the home. Make sure that each family member knows exactly what to do.

Civilianís Corner

by Sam Jones
Brigade Senior Civilian

What About Pay Raises?

The congressional decision to hold over until at least a January decision on budget matters for the current fiscal year has clouded the January 2003 federal raise picture. The latest ìcontinuing resolutionî funding measure will be good through January 11, and it is possible that agencies will continue to be funded through such interim measures through the rest of fiscal 2003, rather than having regular appropriations. Like those before it, the latest temporary measure does not specify a pay raise, meaning that by underlying law, a 3.1 percent general schedule increase is to be paid in January. However, civil service leaders in the House continue to push for the 4.1 percent amount that was in both the House and Senate versions of the now-stalled Treasury-Postal appropriations bill.

A group of House members active in federal employee issues has said that House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., has agreed to support action in January setting the GS average raise at 4.1 percent, retroactive to the beginning calendar year 2003. However, the Bush administration has been pushing since earlier this year for a lower figureóit originally proposed 2.6 percent and later effectively endorsed the 3.1 percent by not recommending an alternative figure to that number by the end of August. That pressure, plus general pressures on Congress to limit spending with the government facing substantial deficits, could put the 4.1 percent figure in doubt even with Hastertís support.

With the January 2003 federal employee pay raise still not put into law, the next development on the raise will be an order issued by the White House due by November 30. The order is needed in order to prevent the raises indicated by the underlying federal pay law from kicking in. Counting across-the-board and locality components, the raises would have to average more than 18 percent in order to comply with the lawís provisions. Not even the most ardent supporters of federal employees believe that such a figure is possible. The only question, they say, is what raise figure the White House order will indicate. Their best-case scenario would be that the White House would advocate a 3.1 percent across-the-board raise and 1 percentage point for locality pay and thus effectively end the suspense caused by Congressís failure to legislate a figure. (article from FEDweek 20 Nov 2002)

Knowing Your Magic Retirement Number

There are numerous magic numbers in the retirement program and understanding the important features of these programs is a must. There are five major categories of the federal governmentís retirement program, each with eligibility rules depending on age and years of service:
Optional Retirement,Special Optional Retirement,Early Optional Retirement,Discontinued Service Retirement and Disability Retirement

You need to know which of these retirement programs you qualify for and when you will qualify for them. You will get a complete easy-to-understand explanation of each of these retirement programs in FEDweekís Book of Answers. There is no other book like The Book of Answers.

FEDweek has published The Book of Answers for Federal Employees and Retirees. This comprehensive publication contains complete answers, expert advice and guidance to nearly every question, situation or life event that a federal employee or retiree experiences, that are why this publication is appropriately nicknamed ìThe What If Bookî.

What if? is a question we have heard time and again from our readers who simply donít know what effect a change in status (marriage, divorce, illness, outside work, leaving government, etc.) will have on their government job and benefits. What if I get married-or divorced? What if I leave government before Iím eligible to retire? What if I want to supplement my government salary with outside income? What if Iím sidelined by a serious medical problem? What if I come back to work after retirement? The list goes on and on. Yet there has never been a resource designed to directly address these questions as they are really asked. Until now.

The Book of Answers for Federal Employees and Retirees takes a special type of perspective at federal benefits, describing what happens and what to do as a federal employee, retiree or family member when major life events occur. Information on these topics previously was scattered among numerous sources and agencies. Even for active federal employees who have personnel offices available to them, thereís been no such thing as one-stop shopping because so many different programs are involved. Those whoíve taken their ìwhat ifî questions or situation to increasingly hard-pressed personnel offices know that only too well. The problem becomes even more severe for retirees, who are on their own.

The various federal benefits all have special rules that apply in certain life situations, including some with deadlines that, once missed, canít be waived. These federal programs include health insurance, life insurance, retirement, the Thrift Savings Plan, Social Security, and more. And there are even some changes that occur at certain ages without a triggering life event, such as the decrease in the supplementary life insurance under FEGLI Basic between ages 35 and 45, or a potential decrease in that coverage after age 65, for example.

The Book of Answers For Federal Employees and Retirees presents a mix of practical information plus insight gleaned from our long experience in talking with employees and retirees about their most serious and important concerns. It all came down to one big what if question: What if there were a book that answered those questions? Here it is! Take a look at just some of the questions that this valuable book answers:

Go to http://www.fedweek.com/Publications/default.asp for more information. (article from FEDweek, 20 Nov 2002)

photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt

photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Hunt

Sgt. Heather George: 704th NCO of the Quarter

Sgt. Heather George, a native of St. Lucia in the Caribbean, has been awarded the 704th Military Intelligence Brigade Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter.

George entered the military in 1999. She graduated from Basic Training and from Advanced Individual Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., receiving the military occupational specialty personnel administrative specialist.

The 704th MI Brigade is Georgeís second duty station and her present duties include Headquarters and Headquarters Company Standard Installation and Division Personnel System (SIDPERS) clerk, HHC Retention NCO and HHC promotion NCO. She was previously assigned with the 557th Military Police Company at Camp Humpreys in South Korea.

ìI started studying for the board in September. Each day I would study two to three subjects. Somedays, I would study for hours,î said George.

To win the 704th MI Brigade NCO of the Quarter, George competed against NCOs from the 741st, 742nd and 743rd MI Battalions. All NCOs who competed for the board had previously won their battalion or company NCOs of the quarter.

ìI felt nervous at first, but after I finished the board, I felt confident that I could win,î said George.

Spc. Franklin Pipes: 704th Soldier of the Quarter

Spc. Franklin Pipes, a native of Granite Falls, N.C., has been awarded the 704th Military Intelligence Brigade Soldier of the Quarter.

Pipes entered the military in June of 2000. He graduated from Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and then from Advanced Individual Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., receiving the military occupational specialty personnel information system manager.

The 704th MI Brigade is Pipesí first duty station and his present duties include 704th Standard Installation and Division Personnel System (SIDPERS) clerk and Headquarters and Headquarters Company COOP facilitator.

ìSince early August of this year, I have been studying for 30 minutes to an hour each day after work,î said Pipes.

ìI focused my studies on the subjects I was weaker in such as counseling and leadership,î added Pipes.

To win the 704th MI Brigade Soldier of the Quarter, soldiers must compete in their company Soldier of the Month; company Soldier of the Quarter and the brigade Soldiers of the Quarter on a board answering questions on the military.

ìI went to the brigade Soldier of the Quarter last year, and I had a bad experience,î noted Pipes. ìThis year I was very surprised to win.î

VISION STATEMENT

704th Military Intelligence Brigade

Be the premier Army team providing full-spectrum signals intelligence and operational support to warfighters and national command authorities ì*HERE AND EVERYWHERE*.î