

Inside The Voice



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courtesy photo

Soldiers from the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers program prepare sandwiches to give to the homeless.

Soldiers lend a helping hand

BY SPC. BRIAN MURPHY
Editor, The Voice

A study by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty in 1999, estimated more than 700,000 people are homeless on any given night, and up to 2 million people experience homelessness during one year. The worse part is - that statistic continues to grow each year.

It is precisely because of numbers like these that 10 local soldiers from the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers program teamed with the Salvation Army and Cedar Ridge Community Church to feed the homeless in our nation's capital, Washington D.C., Feb. 2.

Through the outreach program, individuals head downtown the first Saturday of each month with as many ham and cheese and peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches as they can carry. Homemade soups and cookies have also been handed out during the trips.

By donating only four hours of their time (two hours to prepare the meals and two passing the food out), these soldiers managed to put food in the mouths of 200 individuals who might not have otherwise eaten that day.

Spc. Michael Caves, BOSS president, participated in the program because, according to him, he wanted to make a difference.

"Helping the less fortunate is important," he said, "but it's not enough to drop a dime in a collection box. When you prepare a meal and deliver it to a homeless person, you have a direct impact on them. You know your time spent is really helping someone."

A few of the volunteers weren't sure how the homeless people would react to them, but after visiting the first few people they knew they were doing the right thing.

"Some expected it, some wanted more, but most were appreciative," Caves said. "I am glad we went.

These servicemembers were able to see the D.C. homeless problem firsthand. You get a sense of gratification when each person thanks you. By just donating a little time, we were able to help someone and put life in perspective. The challenges that we face everyday may sometimes seem overwhelming, but when those challenges are compared to the challenge of surviving on the street, we learn to appreciate all that we have."

The homeless individuals received a nice meal, but they weren't the only people who got something out of the day, according to Caves.

"It is mutually beneficial," he said. "The local community receives a service, and the soldier feels good about representing the Armed Forces in a positive manner."

Those soldiers or servicemembers interested in making a difference and participating in the outreach program can contact Caves at (301) 677-0745 for additional information.

Brigade welcomes new career counselor

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS WILLENE ORR
Brigade Reenlistment

There is a new member of the 704th Military Intelligence Brigade Retention Team, and he is Staff Sgt. Joseph Collins, Jr., career counselor, 742nd Military Intelligence Battalion. He is a recent graduate of the Career Counselor Basic Course, and arrived to the brigade in January. One of his first comments was, "I am ready to reenlist some soldiers!" And Collins has done just that. He brings with him a positive energy that will be contagious throughout the battalion and the brigade.

Collins was born in New Orleans, Feb. 24, 1969. He enlisted in the U.S. Army as a Fixed Communication Security Repairer (35E) Sept. 17, 1987 and received Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

His military experience includes assignments to 203rd Military Intelligence Battalion (Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland) where he served as a Foreign Communication Analyst; 501st Military Intelligence Brigade (Korea) where he served as a Computer and Communication Repair Supervisor; A Co. 73rd Ordnance Battalion (Fort Gordon, Georgia) where he served as a 35E Advanced Individual Training Instructor; 1st Signal Brigade, Project Support Directorate (Korea) where he served as a Brigade Level Communications Installer; A Co. 556th Signal Battalion (Fort Huachuca, Arizona) where he served as a Battalion level Communications Installer; Signal Support Company (Berlin Brigade,

Germany) where he served as a Fixed COMSEC Repairer.

Collins' military education includes: Primary Leadership Development Course; Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course; Electronic Installer Course; Instructor Course, Nuclear Biological and Chemical Course, Combat Lifesaver Course, and the Basic Career Counselor Course.

Collins' awards and decorations include: the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal (two oak leaf clusters), the Good Conduct Medal (fourth award), the National Defense Service Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon (two), the Army of Occupation Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (two), and the Career Counselor Badge.

We look forward to Collins being a part of the 704th MI Brigade Retention Team. We know he will do great exploits for our soldiers with "Might Through Vigilance" while reenlisting them "Here and Everywhere!"

If you have a special article pertaining to a reenlistment, please forward to: orrw@meade-704.army.mil. For more information on retention, please contact your career counselors listed below:

704th MI Brigade
Sgt. 1st Class Orr (301) 677-0164
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Staff Sgt. Ingle (310) 677-0157
742nd MI Battalion
Staff Sgt. Collins (301) 677-0117
743rd MI Battalion
Staff Sgt. Pringle (303) 677-5048



courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Joseph Collins Jr., is the new career counselor for the 742nd Military Intelligence Battalion, after taking over for the departed Staff Sgt. Cynthia Kling.

Upcoming:

The Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers program is currently putting together a BOSS trip tentatively scheduled for April to Walt Disney World, in Florida as part of Disney's Armed Forces Salute.

Contact Spc. Michael Caves at (301) 677-0745 for details.



The Voice is an authorized unofficial publication under the provisions of AR 360-1. Reproduced by the the Defense Automated Printing Service, The Voice serves as an information medium for the soldiers and families of the Brigade. Circulation is 300 copies a month. Opinions expressed in the Voice do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or any of their commands, agencies or affiliates. Material selected for publication is subject to editing. Manuscripts and photos submitted for consideration should be sent to:

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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.

743rd bids farewell to officers, families

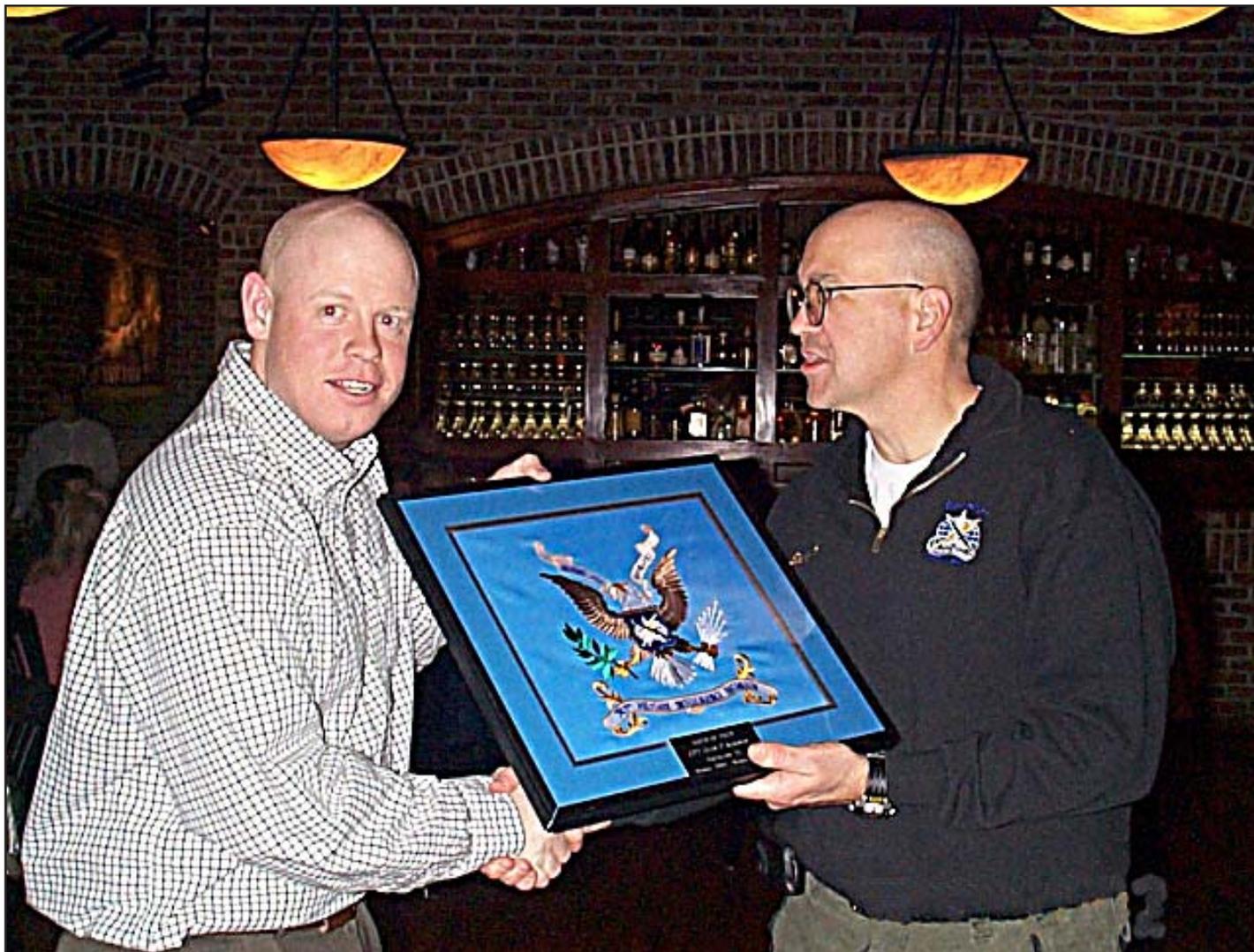
BY DENVER BEAULIEU-HAINS
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

Officers and family members of the 743rd Military Intelligence Battalion met at Grady's American Grill in Englewood, Colorado to bid a fond farewell to Capt. Margaret Musser, company commander, Headquarters and Operations Command; Capt. Sean Kernan, battalion personnel officer; and Capt. Maria Monforte, D Crew RANGER Training Supervisor Feb. 8.

Musser served as HOC Commander for 17 months, from September 2000 - February 2002. Capt. Lynn Wright replaced her as HOC commander during a Change of Command ceremony Feb 14. Maggie's next assignment is still up in the air as of this article. Possibilities include: INSCOM Commander's Aide, acceptance into the Junior Officer Cryptologic Career Program, or PCSing to Kuwait to be closer to her husband, Ron. Good luck wherever you go, Maggie. Summing up Maggie's parting words as HOC Commander: "Its been real!"

Kernan served with the battalion from March 2000 - March 2002. During that time he worked with two battalion commanders, three executive officers, and six company commanders. Don't they give monetary awards for that!?!

Kernan finishes his time in service to become an Investment Representative for Edward Jones Investments. Kernan wanted me to pass on, "Anyone who wants to start investing or would like to get some advice, feel



courtesy photo

Capt. Sean Kernan, former plans and operations officer, 743rd MI Battalion, receives a guidon during his 'Hail and Farewell.'

free to contact him at (303) 632-5686 or spk13@netzero.net." Way to get that in, Sean! Kernan's replacement, 1st Lt. Darcy Lewis, arrives from Fort Hood and the 1st Cavalry Division in March. Good luck in the civilian world!

Monforte arrived at the 743rd MI Battalion in January 1999. After en-

joying a few short months in Denver, she was fortunate enough to get deployed to Macedonia on a 169 day Temporary Change of Station as a platoon leader.

After returning, she attended the 35G Course at Fort Huachuca and certified SWO for Delta Crew. Over the last several months, she has overseen

RANGER training within the Aerospace Data Facility. Maria will most likely stay in the Denver area and is considering several options for her next job.

We, the soldiers of the 743rd MI Battalion, bid a fond farewell to the three captains and with them the best of luck in the future.



Soldiers earn medals

(From left to right) Team USA-2, Spc. Dan Steele, Brian Shimer, Spc. Mike Kohn and Spc. Doug Sharp show off their newly awarded bronze medal for the men's four-man bobsled after a 2002 Winter Olympic Games medal ceremony in Salt Lake City, Feb. 24, 2002. Out of the four-man team, three are members of the Army. Sharp serves on active duty, while Steele is part of the Oregon National Guard and Kohn is part of the Virginia National Guard. Shimer, the lone civilian and a five-time Olympian, has been competing with the soldiers for two years on their sleigh, provided by the Army World Class Athlete program.

photo by Preston Keres

Continuing to prove our value

BY MAJ. GEN. KEITH B. ALEXANDER
Commander, INSCOM

The war against terrorism has tested and proven INSCOM's capabilities and value to the Army and the Nation. This fight has called upon every part of the command and required extra effort from the active duty force, Army National Guard and Reserve, civilians and contractors.

You have stood guard on installations, rolled up your sleeves to give blood, raised funds for victims of the terrorist attacks and shown the INSCOM patch among warfighters and your peers from other major commands. Your reports and analyses have made a critical contribution to fighting the war, identifying and bringing to justice those who perpetrated the attacks, and protecting military installations from further attacks.

Our families also have been affected as the work force put in long hours and, for those who are deployed, spent time away from home during the holiday season, birthdays, anniversaries, births, recitals and children's sports games, to name only a few of the important events of daily life you have missed while performing your duty.

The war against terrorism will be a long one. In that way, it is closer in nature to the wars that our

parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents knew—the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War generations—compared to the short campaigns that the military has conducted in the last 25 years—Grenada, Panama, Desert Storm and Kosovo.

Another aspect of the new war is that it is against a widespread foe, with terrorist groups reported to be in dozens of countries. As we saw Sept 11, terrorists can blend into society, even openly receiving training and information that allows them to carry out their attacks.

As the Army's operational intelligence force, INSCOM has responsibility for many of the tools used against terrorism. Each of the intelligence disciplines—signals intelligence, human intelligence, counterintelligence, imagery intelligence and measure and signature intelligence—along with force protection, production and information warfare, has been and will be a big part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Along with our professional responsibilities, we all have personal responsibilities to ensure our security remains intact. Be alert to any apparent threat or suspicious activity. Keep up to date on antiterrorist and force protection training and measures. Protect classified information.

I can't say enough how proud and grateful I am as your commander. My frustration as Commanding Gen-



Maj. Gen. Keith B. Alexander

file photo

eral is I can't individually shake the hand of each of you. But you deserve to have your hand shaken, and I hope you understand that I and the Army leadership appreciate everything you have done.

Security should be soldier's chief priority

BY PFC. JENNIFER HOGG
HHC, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade

Security is something that is talked about all the time, especially in the military intelligence community. But it's not something we think enough about. I know I didn't, until I got a call saying that someone had found my Campus Access Badge.

That is when I realized that if the wrong people had found it, not only would they have access to where I live, but also to my office building. My badge would bring them one step closer to the National Security Agency itself. This incident has made me think of safety issues that I should have considered before; such as my room key or my car keys or my entire wallet.

Some people don't consider it a big deal to lose their badge. They may think it's just a matter of going to have another made. It should be thought of as a credit card that you've lost and now someone else is using it to purchase some kind of illegal substances or make unauthorized purchases haven't bothered to call and report it missing. Much like the credit card - the bill still comes to you. Things could only get worse if the police get involved and show up at your door because, after all, this card still has your name on it. It is the same with the campus access badge. If something happens, it will come back to you.

Also, I realized that it wouldn't only affect me if something went wrong. It wouldn't be my personal information they



photo by Spc. Brian Murphy

would be looking for if they got into an office, or my room. I would be a nobody to them, just one among the many. They would be going after government secrets and information that could destroy our National Defense. I would just be the key they used to get to all of this information. How would I feel knowing that I was responsible for the downfall of the United States. Okay, a little extreme, I

know, but not far from the truth. Not only that, what if someone got hurt or even killed because they realized what was going on and tried to stop it. Would I be able to live with that?

Therefore, my safety advice, not only for security purposes, but also because it saves a lot of grief in the long run, is whenever you go in or out of a building, or your room or get in and out of your

car, and after you go through the gates, check for all the following items; keys, both room and car, you ID card and badge, and any other papers or items that you can think of that would be a security issue if lost. Also, report any of those items missing as soon as you notice their absence. And remember, security and safety go hand in hand, and that its an all the time issue.

Army Lodging: your home away from home

Whether making a permanent change of station (PCS) move or on a temporary duty (TDY) assignment for schooling, transitioning service members arriving or departing Fort Meade need not worry about their accommodations.

BY SGT. DENNY COX
The SoundOFF!

The Army Lodging program of the Directorate of Personnel and Community Activities' Billeting Division here provides 252 fully-furnished rooms for military personnel and their families.

Lodging manager Emma Beard oversees seven facilities and more than 50 administrative, maintenance and housekeeping employees.

"Our mission is to make the transitioning service members' lodging experience as worry-free as possible," said Beard.

The process begins when Beard's branch receives TDY or PCS orders from sponsoring military organizations or the service members themselves. Those without orders are welcome to use the facilities if there are vacancies and may make reservations over the telephone or in person.

"Reservations may be made 30 days in advance by visitors and 60 days before arrival by those on orders," she said.

After receiving the reservation, Beard's staff assigns incoming guests their rooms. The size and location of the rooms depend on the purpose of the person's visit.

"A service member PCSing here with his or her family will be assigned a room at Abrams Hall," she said.

Abrams Hall is the post guest house, a hotel-like facility with 54 rental units designed for families awaiting assignment of post quarters or acquisition of off-post accommodations.

Arriving patrons may sign into their rooms at the front desk in Abrams Hall between 2 and 6 p.m. daily, although late check-in may be requested. The hall also rents rooms to visitors without orders on a space-available basis.

"Customers on TDY and single service members making PCS moves are usually placed in one of the six remaining transient facilities," Beard said. These facilities are located between Reece Road and Mapes Avenue along Cooper Avenue.

Single guests of the transient lodging facilities stay in private rooms or suites depending upon availability and rank. All customers must sign in at the Billeting Office located in Brett Hall, Building 4707 on Ruffner Road.

Customers fill out a registration form, receive their keys and are shown to their rooms.

Rooms are furnished with telephones, cable televisions, microwave ovens, refrigerators, irons, ironing boards, towels, soap and linens. Housekeeping services are provided daily.

The transient lodging facilities feature free coffee, a calling card vending machine, free laundry and ice machines.

Abrams Hall provides guests with a common kitchen, vending machines and a playground, as well as many of the amenities found in transient facilities.

The length of a service member's stay depends on his or her orders.

Those making a PCS move are authorized to stay in the billets for up to 30 days.

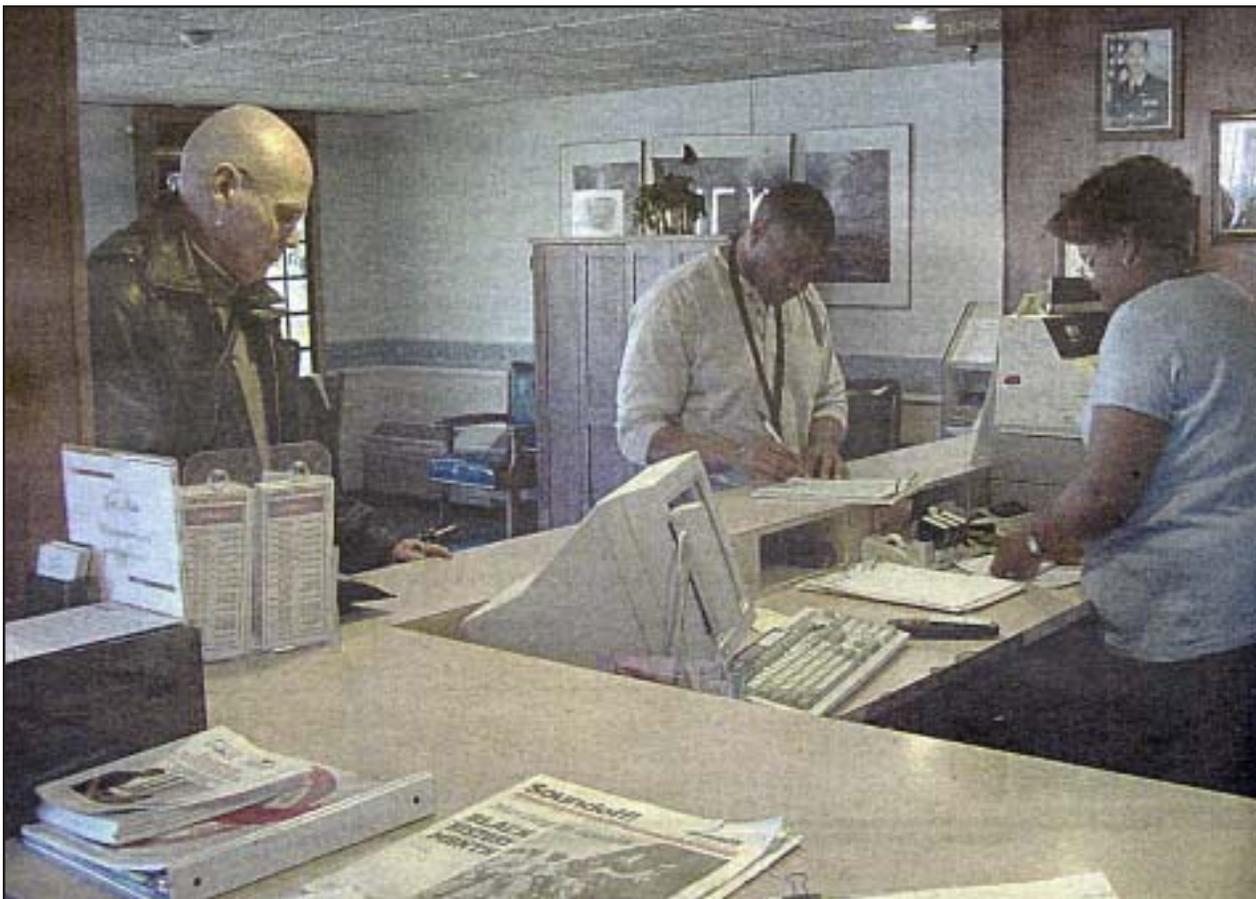


photo by Sgt. Denny Cox

Nikki Herbert (right) assists guests with registration forms at Abrams Hall here. The hall offers 54 of the Army Lodging program's 252 rooms and is designed for service members and their families making permanent change of station moves.

Service members on TDY orders are housed for the duration of their assignment.

"We have guests who are just passing through who stay with us for one night and DINFOS (Defense Information School) students who are with us for up to a year," said Beard.

Visitors who make reservations on a space-available basis are authorized to stay up to seven days but must register daily to ensure the needs of those with reservations are met.

Cost, too, is based on the guests' purpose for lodging, according to Beard.

Single rooms for those making a PCS move is \$35 a night at Abrams Hall.

Double rooms cost \$39. Visitors at Abrams Hall pay \$39 for a single room and \$43 for a double. Each extra adult is \$5 per night.

In the transient lodging facilities, a private room with a bath shared with another room costs service members on TDY \$32.50. A room with a private bath is \$40.

Suites are available for those in grades E-9 and above at historic Kuhn Hall, Building 4415 on Llewellyn Avenue. The hall offers seven suites, all with private baths, sitting rooms, bedrooms and kitchens. It was built in 1931 and serves as the installation's Distinguished Visitors Quarters. Cost for the suites is \$44 per night.

Because of recent changes in Army finance systems, all service members on orders pay for their accommodations with a government credit card. The guest is responsible for any other expenses such as telephone charges and room damages.

Only when no vacancies exist in any of the facilities are guests issued statements of non-availability and authorized to find lodging off post at government expense, Beard said.

Most of the guests who stay in billeting are happy with the accommodations, according to Larry Williams, a front-desk employee at Brett Hall.

"We do get complaints, but most are easily resolved.

"Since we are an Army post, people from other services sometimes have problems with the way we do things," he said.

Air Force 1st Lt. Warren Neary had his complaint handled in a matter of minutes.

"I had to share a bathroom with an enlisted person," said the Public Affairs Officer Course student.

"The Air Force doesn't normally do that, and the people here were able to get me another room in about two minutes," he said.

Marine 1st Lt. Justin Colvin, another Public Affairs Officer Course student at DINFOS, has enjoyed his four-week stay.

"It's nice to have carpeting, but of course the Air Force still complains," he said smiling.

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Dusan Ilic, echoed many other guests with his praise for the facilities.

"This is my first time on an Army base, and I was pleasantly surprised. The place is very clean and the service is great," he said. Ilic has stayed in Brett Hall for a month and a half and is also a DINFOS student.

One complaint that nearly all guests mentioned was the telephone system. It is a problem that has been identified and steps are in place to correct it, according to Williams.

"We have a limited number of phone lines and when guests logon to the Internet and stay online for extended periods, no one else can make a call," he said.

Until a solution is implemented, guests are asked to be considerate of others needing the lines. In case of emergencies, patrons may call 911 on courtesy phones in the corridors and all buildings have pay phones available.

Living in the billets is much different than staying in barracks, Beard noted.

"We do require that our guests follow a code of conduct, but other than that, we try to maintain a hotel-like atmosphere," she said.

Soldier carries WTC flag at Olympic opener

SALT LAKE CITY (Army News Service) - It was an offer two-time Olympian Sgt. Kristina Sabasteanski couldn't refuse.

U.S. Biathlon team leader Steve Sands had a request for the Army World Class Athlete Program soldier Feb. 7.

"I was sitting at breakfast the day before opening ceremonies and the team leader says 'How would you feel about carrying the World Trade Center flag?'" she said.

Sands nominated Sabasteanski as biathlon's pick to represent skiing athletes. It didn't take long for her to say yes.

"I was speechless. I was like, wow! It was so exciting," she said.

Recovered from the WTC building's ruins after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack, the flag's presence at the ceremony caused controversy between the American and International Olympic committees. The tattered flag was carried into the 19th Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony at Rice-Eccles stadium Feb. 8 by eight athletes, escorted by New York City firefighters and Port Authority police.

"It was pretty emotional. This isn't just touching it, it was both extremes," Sabasteanski said of the experience. "You're feeling 'Wow, this is the World Trade Center flag and it represents the power of America, that we can come back.' Then you're thinking 'What did this flag see?' This flag was what was left of 3,000 lives. In that aspect you're feeling somber.

"One second you'd be inspired, elated, and the next you're choking back tears."



photos by Preston Keres

Sgt. Kristina Sabasteanski was one of the Olympic team members who carried the tattered World Trade Center's American flag during opening ceremonies Feb. 8.

The IOC's concern was that the flag's presence would cause excessive nationalism at an event that is designed to celebrate international togetherness. Its appearance left the crowd of 55,000 spectators and 5,000 ceremony participants in respectful silence.

Most of the rest of the three-hour, 40-minute spectacle had the crowd invigorated in the 18-degree wind chill. Musical performances by artists Robbie Robertson, LeAnn

Rimes, the Dixie Chicks, Sting and Yo Yo Ma reflected the diversity of the games' participants.

The crowd pleaser of all Olympic opening ceremonies, however, remains the parade of athletes. Representing 77 countries, more than 2,300 athletes had the spotlight as their nation's name was announced. With only 234 medals to be presented, marching into the stadium at the ceremony represents the highlight of the games for 99 percent of the Olympians.

"I waited 12 years to walk into an Olympic games opening. Last night was so perfect," said Spc. Mike Kohn of the Olympic bobsled team. "I'm fortunate enough to represent this country in the games as an athlete and a soldier. It doesn't get any better than that."

The World Class Athlete Program soldier joined more than 200 American Olympic team athletes, coaches and officials in a pre-ceremony pep talk from President George W. Bush.

"Last night being next our com-

mander in chief was just overwhelming for me," Kohn said. "I just can't stop smiling, I'm really enjoying this. It was just such a moving experience."

Sabasteanski is on her second consecutive Olympic team. The opening ceremony in the U.S. was different from Nagano, Japan, in 1998.

"That was amazing in Japan, but then I was like 'Wow, I actually made the Olympics!' Now I'm in my own country and these Americans are cheering for everyone here," she said. "It was one of the biggest highs of my life."

Sabasteanski and Kohn are two of 12 Army athletes and coaches at the Olympics. Kohn teams with fellow WCAP athlete Spc. Doug Sharp as a pusher on the USA 2 bobsled. Former WCAP members Dan Steele and Garrett Hines are also on the bobsled team, now members of the Army National Guard and Army Reserves respectively. Coaching the women's bobsled team are Spc. Bill Tavares and Sgt. Tuffy LaTour. The driver of the women's USA 2 sled is Spc. Jill Bakken. All three are WCAP members.

WCAP athletes on the men's biathlon team are Spc. Jeremy Teela and Sgt. Lawton Redman. National Guard Sgt. Kara Salmela joins Sabasteanski and WCAP's Spc. Andrea Nahrgang on the women's squad.

Soldiers have been competing in the Olympic Games since 1912.



Members of the U.S. Olympic team, including women's biathlete Sgt. Kristiana Sabasteanski (second from right), hold a U.S. flag that flew over the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, during the national anthem at the Opening Ceremonies of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, on Feb. 8, 2002.



Spc. Jeremy Teela takes aim in the range during the men's 20km individual biathlon event at Soldier hollow in Midway, Utah during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, Feb. 11, 2002. Teela finished with a personal best of two missed targets, which led him to a 14th place finish, the best in American history for the Olympic Games



(Above) Sgt. Kristina Sabasteanski (R) takes off for her anchor leg of the women's 4 X 7.5km relay in the 2002 Winter Olympic Games after being tagged by teammate Rachel Steer on Feb. 18, 2002. Team USA would finish the race in 15th place, 13:21.0 behind the leader.

(Left) Spc. Jill Bakken (right) and Vonetta Flowers in USA-2, sprint down the track for the women's two-man Bobsled in their way to a gold medal Feb. 19.

Around the Army

Force protection key for 101st in Afghanistan



photos by Ted Banks

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne, Fort Campbell, Ky., protect the "front lines" at the Kandahar International Airport, Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (Army News Service) — Force protection, the security of Kandahar International Airfield and logistics are the primary goals for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Afghanistan.

"This airfield is extremely important," said Col. Frank Wiercinski, Task Force Rakkasans' (3rd BCT) commander. "It brings in continued Air Force supply and re-supply. Holding this airfield and ensuring everyone here is safe and secure is my primary job right now."

Wiercinski said the transfer of authority between the Marines and the Rakkasans went very smooth. However, he said a relief in place is a very dangerous time because of the transfer of command and control from one unit to another.

"We've been very systematic and extremely sequential in the transfer of authority," he said. "We are in a combat zone where inefficiency can become extremely dangerous."

Getting the troops and logistics half way around the world has been a challenge. Yet, Wiercinski said so far things have gone seamless.

"Our resources are perfect for this

mission," he said. "We have the right amount of equipment with the right amount of soldiers. If I need anything else - I know it will get here because I've already asked and they've arrived."

The giant task of supporting the 3rd BCT falls under the 626th Forward Support Battalion, Fort Campbell, Ky. - a mission the unit is accustomed to.

"Whether in garrison, in the field or deployed, we're an integral part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team," said Lt. Col. Thomas Pirozzi, commander, 626 FSB. "We train with them everyday."

Pirozzi's soldiers normally work 18 hours a day keeping the airport's runway clear while downloading supplies from incoming Air Mobility Command's C-17s and then distributing the supplies among the different units inside the compound.

"I can have twice as many forklifts and still not have enough," he said. "This piece of equipment (forklift) is integral in getting as much supplies on the ground to complete the mission."

Currently there is a constant flow of food, water, ammunition, barrier material and medication into the airfield. Pirozzi also intends to have laundry services and hot meals for the soldiers in the near future.



Sgt. Daniel Corey and Spc. Seth Greer from the 101st Airborne, Fort Campbell, Ky., enjoy the Super Bowl from their "Hummer" vehicle at Kandahar International Airport.

Around the Army

Soldiers must choose retirement options

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — The first soldiers eligible for a \$30,000 bonus must decide by March 1 whether they want the new Career Status Bonus/REDUX retired-pay plan.

Under the CSB/REDUX plan, soldiers essentially receive \$30,000 of their retirement pay early, at least five years before hanging up their uniforms, a personnel official said.

The March 1 deadline for the bonus applies to soldiers who began their service after July 31, 1986, and before March 1, 1987. They must select between either the High-Three or CSB/REDUX retirement options.

A few soldiers already opted for the CSB/REDUX plan when they signed up for the Thrift Savings program, officials said. They explained that soldiers are supposed to make the decision by the 15th anniversary of their entry into service, but the initial deadline was delayed until March 1.

Choices about such options need time and careful thought, said Gary F. Smith, former chief of Army Retirement Services in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. He described the career-status bonus as smart for someone who will invest the \$30,000 wisely.

"It would not be smart for someone who will use the bonus to run out and buy a car," Smith said.

Many soldiers are unsure which retired-pay plan they are covered by, personnel officials said. They explained that three different plans are currently in use. The plan a soldier uses is determined by his or her DIEMS, or Date Initially Entered Military Service.

Soldiers with DIEMS before Sept. 8, 1980, receive a percentage of their final basic pay. Those with DIEMS on or after Sept. 8, 1980, receive a percentage of the average of their highest 36 months of basic pay, referred to as the High-Three formula. Soldiers with DIEMS after July 31, 1986, may choose between the High-Three and Career Status Bonus (CSB/REDUX) formulas. Each formula begins with the number of years of creditable service, officials said.

A notice will appear on qualifying soldiers' Leave and Earnings Statements alerting them that they must choose a formula. The choice cannot be changed once made, officials said.

Soldiers choosing the CSB/REDUX option receive a \$30,000 career-status bonus during their 15th year of service and agree to serve five more years. Retired pay then equals the number of years of creditable service multiplied by 2.5 percent, minus 1 percent for each year of service under 30, multiplied by the average of the soldier's highest 36 months of basic pay.

At age 62, retired pay will be recomputed under the High-Three formula, but will not be retroactive. Under CSB/REDUX, the longer one stays on active duty, the closer the percentage multiplier is to what it would have been under the High-Three formula, up to the 30-year point at which the percentage multipliers are equal.

The \$30,000 career-status bonus is subject to federal and state taxes. According to the Internal Revenue Service's elective deferral limit, citizens may shelter up to \$11,000 in tax-free savings programs such as the Thrift Savings Plan in 2002.

Misunderstandings about health care for retirees are also common, according to Army personnel officials.

"One of the reasons people join the military is because they think they'll have free medical care for the rest of their lives," Smith said. "But retirees are living longer now and the military has downsized."

To take or decline the Survivor Benefit Plan is perhaps soldiers' toughest retirement decision, Smith said.

"Initially, it looks like a lot of money going into something you don't automatically see the value of," Smith said. "And some soldiers think they'll be better off investing the money elsewhere, but they don't, leaving survivors without income protection when the soldier dies."

An Army retiree himself, Smith recommends that soldiers take their children's needs into account when choosing whether to move or to stay in the same location as their final duty station.

"Moving around is often harder for kids than it is for adults. They have to say goodbye to friendships just like we do," Smith said.

Since many retirement benefits continue for family members after the retiree departs by death or divorce, soldiers should give their loved ones an active role in retirement planning, Smith recommended.

A proactive attitude is Smith's advice for a smooth retirement. "Don't be afraid of retirement. It's natural to be anxious," he said. "But go into it with a positive attitude and be proud of yourself. That will make the experience so much more pleasurable."

'Stop-loss' program adds 38 career-management fields

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — The Army has just added 38 more career-management fields and military occupational specialties to the "stop-loss" program.

The program was first implemented for selected active-duty soldiers in November and then expanded with additional specialties and to the reserve component in December.

Army officials announced Feb. 12 the third stop-loss increment, affecting selected active, Reserve and National Guard troops by stopping voluntary requests for retirement or separation, effective Feb. 22.

This expansion is the largest to date. It will impact approximately 2,630 active-duty, 3,920 Reserve and 4,190 National Guard soldiers, said Lt. Col Bob Ortiz, Chief of Enlisted Professional Development for the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1. Those numbers bring the total affected by the three stop-loss announcements to about 3,330 active-duty, 4,450 Reserve and 4,760 National Guard troops.

"Stop-loss is necessary to retain the critical skills needed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle," Ortiz said. "The key word is critical. These are skills where we have found a need to retain soldiers

to support a myriad of operational requirements since Sept. 11th."

Stop-loss does not mean stop movement, Ortiz said. Normal personnel rotations for permanent changes of station and for schooling requirements will continue as scheduled, he said, unless individual soldiers elect to extend at their current duty stations.

Commissioned officers impacted by the latest stop-loss announcement are in the following CMFs: 15C35, Aviation All Source Intelligence

31, Military Police
35, Military Intelligence
45A, Comptroller
48E, Foreign Area Officer (Eurasia)
48G, Foreign Area Officer (Middle East/North Africa)
51C, Contract & Industrial Management

Warrant officers affected by this stop-loss include those with the following specialties:

155E, C-12 Pilot
155G, O-5A/EO-5B/RC-7 Pilot
311A, CID Special Agent
350B, All Source Intelligence Technician
350D, Imagery Intelligence Technician

351B, Counter Intelligence Technician

351C, Area Intelligence Technician
351E, Human Intelligence Collection Technician

352G, Voice Intercept Technician
Enlisted specialties affected include soldiers with the following MOSs:

33W, Intelligence Electronic Warfare Repairman

74B, Information Systems Operator
81T, Topographic Analyst

92R, Parachute Rigger
95B, Military Police

95C, Internment Specialist
95D, CID Special Agent

96B, Intelligence Analyst
96D, Imagery Analyst

96H, Imagery Ground Station Operator

96R, Ground Surveillance System Operator

96Z, Senior Intelligence NCO
97B, Counter Intelligence Agent

97E, Human Intelligence Collector
97L, Translator/Interpreter

97Z, Senior Human Intelligence NCO

98C, Signals Intelligence Analyst
98G, Voice Interceptor -

Cryptologic Linguist

98H, Communications Interceptor
98J, Electronic Intelligence Analyst

98K, Signal Collection Analyst
98Z, Senior Signal Intelligence NCO

The Army will evaluate stop-loss needs on a monthly basis and use it as a tool to maintain unit readiness, Ortiz said. Additional stop-loss actions for other officer, warrant officer, and enlisted specialties are possible, he added.

While the Army evaluates stop-loss needs, it is also starting to plan for when the measure is eventually lifted.

"What we want to avoid 'bathtub effect' of a lot of soldiers being flushed out of any particular unit due to separations and normal PCSs when stop-loss is no longer necessary," Ortiz said. "We want to maintain unit readiness in a post stop-loss Army."

Prior to Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom, the Army last used stop-loss during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990 when President George H. Bush delegated stop loss authority to the Secretary of Defense.

Stop-loss does not affect most involuntary separations or retirements, nor does it generally limit laws, regulations, or policies that may lead to involuntary separations, retirements, or releases from active duty.

Around Town

Washington Monument

Visiting DC's most recognizable landmark

COMPILED BY SPC. BRIAN MURPHY
Editor, The Voice

George Washington has always been viewed as one of our nation's founding fathers. When Washington died in 1799, the country went into a deep mourning that lasted for months. United in grief, in cities throughout the nation people staged mock funerals as a way to show their love and appreciation. Almost immediately a call for a monument to honor this great man went out, but it took 85 years for the call to be answered.

In 1836, the Washington National Monument Society launches a competition for designs of a monument. Robert Mills, architect of public buildings in Washington, wins with a design that combines a pantheon 100-feet high with "an obelisk shaft" 500-feet high. When the monument reaches about 150 feet in 1848, funds began to run out. A monument society poster asks: "Shall this work begun in patriotism be a monument of national disgrace?"

The monument, formally dedicated in 1885, officially opens to the public. People walk up 893 steps to the top of the world's tallest freestanding stone structure. An electric elevator, installed in 1901, zips passengers to the top in five minutes. The hero without parallel was finally honored with a monument as straightforward and true as the man who had inspired it.



SAFETY BRIEF

BY **PATTI SHELLEY**
SAFETY OFFICER

There are more than 50 million cellular phone subscribers in the U.S. Since most of them use their wireless phones while driving at least occasionally, that's a lot of hands off the wheel and eyes off the road. But automobile experts, police, and even field studies are divided over whether cell phones have made an overall negative impact on driving safety.

None of the experts dispute that finger dialing and hand-held phones momentarily distract drivers. But many argue that coffee mugs, CD players, radios - even car fax machines and computers - can cause equal or worse distractions for drivers.

"The other day, I saw a guy driving down the street reading the paper," said AAA of Greater Hartford spokesperson Alan Sagal. "It's also common to see people using their rear-view mirror to put on make-up or comb their hair."

The point, said Master Sgt. John Duley, of the Connecticut State Police, is to drive safely. The question is how



responsible is the individual behind the wheel. There's no getting away from the fact that there are a lot of distractions in today's cars. The driver has to have the ability to concentrate first and foremost on driving."

But is there something about the cell phone that makes this difficult or impossible for some drivers?

The Studies

A 1990 report by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that there is no evidence that the use of car phones poses a hazard to the motoring public. But it also states that there is an absence of rigorous research in the area and its official recommendation is for the use of a hands-free device while a car is in motion.

In February, 1997, The New England Journal of Medicine published perhaps the most thorough study of the issue to date. The study monitored approximately 700 cellular phone users in Ontario, Canada during a 14-month period in 1994 and 1995.

The study concluded that the risk of being involved in some type of traffic incident while using the phone was nearly four times that of the average driver. However, the study determined that the increased risk resulted primarily from the act of talking, of becoming absorbed in the conversation, rather than dialing or searching for phone numbers.

According to the study, telephones that allowed the hands to be free did not appear to be safer than handheld telephones.

The Laws

The Ontario study has made hands-free laws all the more controversial. Countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Brazil, Israel, Switzerland and the United Kingdom already have laws which make it mandatory to either pull off the road when calling or to use technology that does not require holding the handset.

In the United States, some states currently have hands-free laws drafted. But no state has yet passed one, and there is no sign of that happening anytime soon.

According to Tim Ayers, spokesman for the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association, law enforcement personnel generally resist such legislation. "It is very difficult to prove that a driver's inattention to the road and subsequent accident was directly attributable to phone use," he said. "Also, if we make cell phone use illegal, should there also be individual laws against drinking coffee, applying lipstick, handing a fussy baby a toy, or changing radio stations? What about carrying on an engrossing conversation?"

Lacking a study that proves that hands-free operation and voice-activated dialing decrease the hazard potential,

Virginia State Police Captain Howard Gregory said it wouldn't be fair to specifically target cell phones.

In fact, Gregory says "cellular phones are beneficial in many respects. We have found that it is helpful to have the public using them to report suspicious activity, reckless drivers and cars that are disabled, as well as traffic accidents."

California Highway Patrol statistics support Gregory's assertion. In 1988 it logged 334,000 emergency calls from cellular phones. By 1990, that figure jumped to 784,000 calls, an increase of 135 percent. And the Ontario study reported that 40 percent of the people involved in cellular phone-related accidents then used the phone to call emergency services.

State police in both New York and Connecticut said they believe that existing laws are sufficient to protect motorists from unsafe cell phone users.

"The current laws covering safe operation of a motor vehicle and reckless driving give us wide discretion. Having no hands on the wheel is automatically reckless, even if you're not weaving between lanes and cutting drivers off," said Master Sgt. Duley.

"It's legal to drive with one hand, but anything you do that prevents you from paying attention and driving safely is not," he said.

CIVILIAN'S CORNER

BY **SAM JONES**
BRIGADE SENIOR CIVILIAN

Who's looking out for your retirement?

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, which manages the federal employees' Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), is accusing the Bush Administration of trying to thwart the Board's claim for \$350 million in damages from contractor American Management Systems, Inc. (AMS). The Board says that on January 25, 2002 the Justice Department asked a Federal appellate court not to hear the Board's appeal of the case *Mehle v. American Management Systems, Inc.* The origins of the conflict began last year, when the Board fired AMS, which had been under contract to develop and implement a new record keeping system for the TSP. In terminating the contract and filing a \$350 million lawsuit against the contractor, the Board alleged that AMS consistently failed to adhere to the numerous schedules it had established for delivery of the new system, while misleading the Board and delivering inferior interim products to it. The suit sought \$50 million in actual damages and \$300 million in punitive damages for AMS's breach of contract and fraud in its engagement with the Board. But the Justice



Department objected to the suit, claiming that the Board's Executive Director, Roger Mehle, lacked the authority to file the lawsuit. A U.S. District Court judge agreed, and ruled on November 30, 2001 that only the Justice Department has the authority to file the suit on behalf of the Board. The dispute between the Board and the Justice Department revolves in part around whose interests will be primary in the litigation, with the Justice Department claiming that the "interests of the United States as a whole, as articulated by the [President]" should be paramount, while Mehle contends that the "... Plan participants' interests, not those of the President or any other person or group, [should be] given the paramount position..." In the meantime, the Board has submitted draft legislation to Congress that would "confirm the fiduciaries' authority to pursue the Board's claims in court independent of any Administration involvement." Congressional action, Mehle says, would "save needless legal expenses and time and will enable the fiduciaries to bring AMS - and any other wrongdoers against the Plan - to a trial by jury. Such legislation should have the full support of the White House as well, in light of the current nationwide concern about the integrity of 401(k) plan management following Enron's bankruptcy." (from Fedreport.com 4 Feb 2002)

American Forces Press Service reports:

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1, 2002 — DoD civilian employees can access even more financial information services through an improved Defense Finance and Accounting Service Internet site. Up-

grades made in December 2001 to the agency's computerized Employee/Member Self-Service system now allow DoD civilians to make online changes to their state tax withholding; to start, change and stop U.S. Savings Bond purchases; and to view and print 2001 W-2 forms, according to Jim Pitt, deputy director of DFAS electronic commerce, military and civilian pay services.

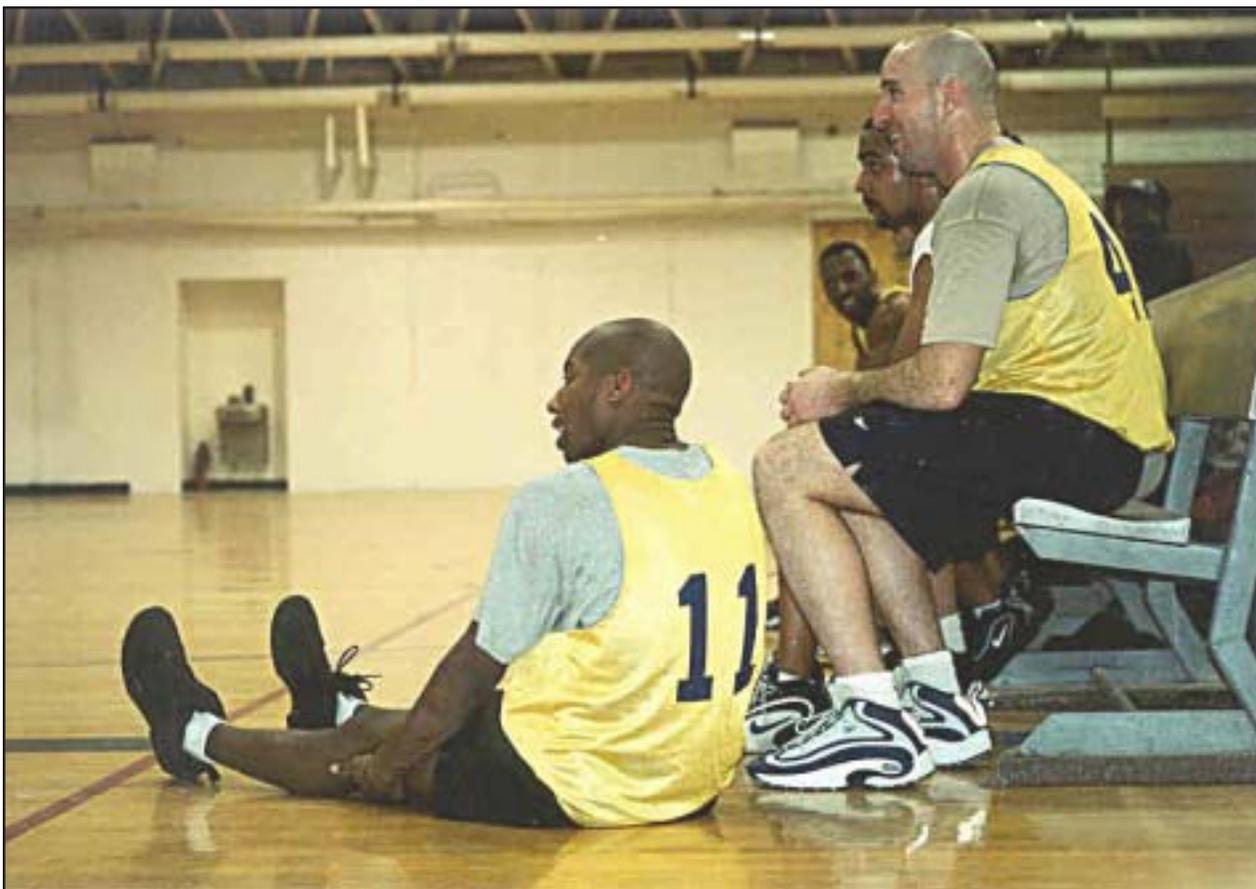
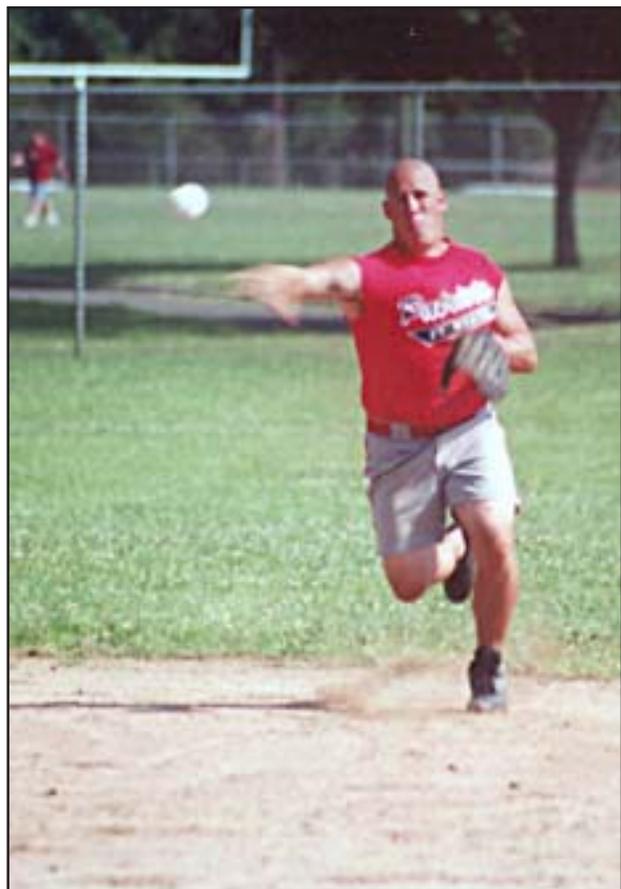
"We want to empower our military and civilian employees to have greater control over their payroll records," Pitt explained, adding that DFAS officials anticipate that military members will have online access to their W-2s next year.

Using the self-service Web site, Pitt noted, is a more efficient way of doing business that's more accurate, saves paper and time, and reduces redundancy. Instead of having administrative specialists re-input employee-provided information, employees can use the system to enter their data themselves, he said.

Another new DFAS self-service Web link, Travel Advice of Payment, allows military and civilian personnel to view and print their paid travel vouchers online, Pitt noted. At first, only payments made after Oct. 2, 2001, by the agency's Cleveland, Indianapolis and Columbus, Ohio, centers will be available. Other payment locations will be made available soon.

Military members and civilians can also use the Web site, <http://www.dfas.mil/emss>, to stop the mailing of their Leave and Earnings Statements, Pitt said.

Post champions ready to defend title



photos by Spc. Brian Murphy

The post intramural basketball season is winding down to a close just in time for the post softball season. Last year, the 704th MI Brigade won the softball post championship.

BY SPC. BRIAN MURPHY
Editor, *The Voice*

Softball season has arrived, and it couldn't get here soon enough in the eyes of many.

Not to take anything away from the basketball teams of the 704th Military Intelligence Brigade or the 741st Military Intelligence Battalion, but softball season is where the brigade has had the opportunity in recent years to flex its proverbial muscle.

Last season, the Big Dogs of HHC, 704th MI Brigade not only won the small unit championship, but they defeated the large-unit representatives, the 91st

IS Demon Chasers, 9-8 to earn bragging rights throughout the installation. In that game, the Big Dogs were down 7-3 after three innings, but used home runs by infielders Jason Bracken and Jonathan Holloway and outfielder Melvin Long to rally to victory.

Sgt. Willie Scott, takes over coaching duties for Sgt. Branden Martino, who was departed the brigade. The team Scott inherits will be almost identical to last year's roster.

Out of 11 starters, only two (Martino, who played outfielder, and designated hitter Sgt. Tracy Robbins) have left the unit. That should work in the Big Dogs' favor, because each of their starters had a batting av-

erage in the neighborhood of .500.

Led by point guard Lavar Gillie and center Marcus Denson, the 741st MI Battalion squad finished the season in third place with a 5-3 record.

After finishing in second place in the post intramural basketball season last year, the 704th MI Brigade team finished the regular season with a 4-5 record. The team, which featured a different roster and starting line-up almost every game, started the year with a 1-4 record.

Once Staff Sgt. Elgin James took over as coach, the team finished out the season by winning three out of four games.



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 "HERE AND EVERYWHERE."