

Family Programs Staff

MAJ Myers
Family Programs Director
(434) 298-6365
lc.myers@us.army.mil

Angeli Wade
Wing Family Coordinator
(804) 864-7036
angeli.wade@varich.ang

1LT Kyle Duffer
State Family Assistance Center OIC
(434) 298-6260
kyle.a.duffer@us.army.mil

SGT Von Ferreira
State Family Assistance Center NOIC
(434) 298-5336
von.s.ferreira@us.army.mil

Julia Alaric
Family Readiness Assistant
(434) 298-6336
julia.alaric@va.ngb.army.mil

Kay Baber
Youth Program Coordinator
(434) 298-6129
kay.baber@us.army.mil

Dana Ivory
Family Programs Assistant
(434) 298-5330
dana.ivory@us.army.mil

Dorian Bell— State Benefits Advisor
(434) 298-5315
dorian.m.bell@us.army.mil

Virginia National Guard



Families in Focus

Governor's Visit to Chesapeake



Governor Kaine meets with spouses and parents of deployed Virginia Guardsmen from the 654th Military Police Company. The meeting took place just prior to the Governor's town meeting in Chesapeake, VA on March 29, 2006. Governor Kaine had met the soldiers of these families while visiting Iraq and placed personal telephone calls to families of all soldiers he met.

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Mental Health Self-Assessment Program

The Mental Health Self-Assessment Program (MHSAP) is a voluntary, anonymous mental health and alcohol screening and referral program offered to families and service members affected by deployment or mobilization. It is offered online 24/7, as well as through in-person events. The MHSAP is funded by the DoD Office of Health Affairs. The programs are offered at no cost to military units and service

members and their families. National Guard units can register for a free kit by visiting <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/military> or by calling (781) 239-0071. Units can also request a free CD that contains materials to promote the online screening Website. The online screening Website can be accessed at <http://www.militarymentalhealth.org>.

Source: Screening for Mental Health website.





May 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 Military Spouse Appreciation Day	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Advance FRG Training & Armed Forces Day
21 Advance FRG Training	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31			

Schedule of Events

May

**Advance Family Readiness
Group Leader Training**
Date & Time: 20-21 May 2006
Location: Fredericksburg

**Upcoming June
Events**

Marriage Enrichment Seminar
Date & Time: 3-4 June 2006
Location: Fort Belvoir

**Coping with Stress &
Separation Workshop**
Date & Time: TBA
Location: TBA

Grantham University Offers Scholarships to Wounded Soldiers and Family Members

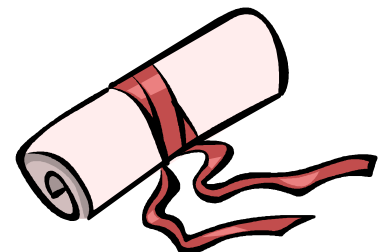
Arlington, Va. – February 15, 2006 Grantham University, specializing in educating working adults, today announced it is offering Military Severely Injured Scholarships in 2006 to U.S. service members from any branch of the United States Military. In order to qualify, scholarship applicants must have received a 60 percent or higher disability rating from the Veterans Administration as a result of being wounded in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom and have been retired from active military duty.

The four-year scholarship program provides tuition and fees to pursue any Grantham University degree program.

Grantham is also extending its 2006 Military Severely Injured Scholarship program to spouses and children of severely injured service members. This scholarship program provides a 25 percent tuition discount on any Grantham University degree program and includes the cost of required textbooks and software.

Wounded service members applying for these scholarships are required to provide a copy of the “Rating Decision” memo issued by the Veterans Administration, verifying their disability related retirement/discharge. Eligible family members must possess a high school diploma or GED and a valid Military Identification Card. Applications and eligibility requirements are located on the Grantham University website at www.grantham.edu/msi.htm.

The Military Severely Injured Center’s mission is to “prepare severely injured service members to return to duty or to reintegrate successfully into their home towns.” The Center provides personalized assistance, tailored to meet an individual’s and family member’s unique needs during recovery and rehabilitation. Other services include: financial resources; education, training and job placement; mobility and functioning; home transportation and workplace accommodations; and personal, couple and family issues counseling. For more information, contact the Center at 1-888-774-1361.



Referral Campaign

Sponsored by The Adjutant General of Virginia

Provide your local recruiter with quality referrals that enlist in the Virginia Army National Guard.

Referrals must complete enlistment processing.

Members of the Virginia Army National Guard including Young Warriors (Non Prior Service Soldiers) are eligible.

Exceptions to this campaign are those assigned to R&R or working ADSW for R&R.

Per Referral= \$500.00

~No Limit~

End Date: Indefinite

POC for This Program
SSG Tammy Spence 434-298-6197
Referral Campaign Manager



Returning to Family Life



Military OneSource website

A great deal of attention is paid to the separation side of military deployment, when military personnel leave families and partners for overseas operations. We can understand the worry and the feelings of loss and loneliness a military deployment can bring to a family. But the return and reunion with families and partners can be just as stressful -- sometimes more so. The difficulties and strains of return can be surprising and sometimes painfully disappointing to military families. But there are steps you can take to make the transition back as joyful and stress-free as possible.

Couples who have been separated by military deployment often look forward to a service member's return as a time of happiness, a chance to get back to "normal" life. Lovers and spouses miss each other and look forward to time together. Children look forward to having a missing parent back at home. The absent service member looks forward to a joyful reunion and the comforts of home. After a dangerous deployment, families are relieved that the service member is returning home safely.

But mixed in with those feelings of excitement and anticipation are also some perfectly normal worries and resentments. Husbands and wives worry that their spouse has changed, that there will be new strains in the relationship. Both partners may dread giving up the independence that being apart has allowed them, and may resent what they imagine as the freedom the other has enjoyed during deployment. While everyone looks forward happily to getting back together, they may also feel some anger at having been separated in the first place (a feeling that children sometimes express very openly).

Reunions can be especially challenging if the deployment was longer or more dangerous than usual, if the deployment created serious money problems for the family, if communicating back home was more difficult than expected, if the deployment is just the latest in a series of deployments, or if there are feelings of jealousy or rumors of infidelity. Without these special strains, reunions are generally much less stressful.

The initial reunion often is happy. But because expectations on all sides are so high, it can also be disappointing. The list of opportunities for crushed hopes is a long one.

What can make return from deployment an unhappy and stressful time is the mismatch between high expectations and the reality of family life, and the need to change and fit into new family roles and routines. But knowing this is also the key to making the return a happy time with a minimum of stress and disappointment. For more information and tips on returning home after deployment, visit Military OneSource at

<http://www.militaryonesource.com>



TRICARE Dental Program Helps National Guard Maintains Deployable Status

Dental readiness is a key component in determining the deployable status of our service members. The TRICARE Dental Program, administered by United Concordia Companies Inc., helps National Guard and Reserve members meet Department of Defense (DoD) dental readiness requirements.

At the individual level, oral health is a major player in overall health. When service members maintain their oral health, they enhance their mental and physical well-being in many ways, improving their self-esteem and minimizing their risk of dental emergencies. The DoD readiness requirement helps the National Guard and Reserve member reduce their

risk of dental problems before and during deployment.

National Guard and Reserve members, with at least 12 months remaining on their service commitment, and their families are eligible for the TRICARE Dental Program. If the enrolled sponsor is activated, he or she becomes eligible for dental treatment in military dental treatment facilities and is automatically disenrolled from the TRICARE Dental Program. In addition, family members benefit from reduced monthly premiums while their sponsor is on active duty. Family member enrollment does not depend on the sponsor being enrolled; family members may enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program at any time.

For more information, beneficiaries may access the TRICARE Dental Program online at www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com, or call toll-free 1-800-866-8499, 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday. Source: TRICARE website.



VA Home Loan Limits Increases



Veterans and military families now have a greater chance to make their dreams of home ownership a reality, thanks to an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty limit.

Effective January 1, 2006, changes in the loan guaranty limits will mean veterans and military families are able to get no-down payment loans up to \$417,000. The previous ceiling was \$359,650.

The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 tied increases in the VA guaranty to increases in the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation's conforming loan limit. When this limit increases, VA guaranty limits also go up, allowing VA to keep pace with rising home values.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With VA guaranteeing a portion of the loan, veterans can receive a competitive interest rate without making a down payment, making it easier to buy a home.

More information about VA home loan benefits is available on the Web at <http://www.homeloans.va.gov> or by calling 1-800-827-1000. Also call Dorian Bell, State Benefits Advisor, (434) 298-5315 or dorian.m.bell@us.army.mil. Source: Home Loan Guaranty Service Website.

Donna Wieland Receives Military Spouse Fellowship Award

Congratulations to Donna Wieland for being selected to receive a Military Spouse Fellowship Award for the Accredited Financial Counselor Program. The award, sponsored by The NASD Investor Education Foundation in conjunction with its partners, the Association for

Financial Counseling and Planning Education and the National Military Family Association, will enable upon a program of study leading to the Accredited Financial Counselor professional designation. Donna, a military spouse and employed at Fort Pickett,

responded to an article published in a previous newsletter and was one of 200 selected from over 2,800 applicants nationwide.

-MAJ Myers





ThanksUSA Announces Collaboration to Promote \$4 Million Scholarship Fund for Military Families

ThanksUSA, a non-partisan, 501 (c)(3) organization, announced today (9 May 06) a partnership with [CinCHouse.com/Operation Homefront](http://CinCHouse.com/OperationHomefront) and a sponsorship by Militaryconnection.com to encourage military spouses and children to apply for the organization's \$4 million college, vocational and technical school scholarship fund in advance of the May 30, 2006 application deadline.

ThanksUSA was founded by two Virginia elementary public school children, Rachel and Kelsi Okun, ages 10 and 8. The scholarships are funded by federal, corporate

and individual contributions. Additional donations for the scholarship fund are expected to come from the first-ever nationwide treasure hunt staged to support military troops. In this treasure hunt, participants of all ages will navigate their way through 12 challenging puzzles, each based on a U.S. state, with clues rooted in American history, culture and geography. Information and applications for both the scholarships and the treasure hunt can be found at www.ThanksUSA.org.

ThanksUSA intends to award at least 1,000 scholarships in amounts of up to \$5,000 each. These need-based scholarships will be awarded on a competi-

tive basis to the spouses and children of active duty military personnel who plan to pursue a post-secondary education, including vocational and technical training. Winners will be selected on the basis of financial need, academic record, demonstrated leadership and participation in school and community activities. Preference will also be given to students who have studied a foreign language. Interested applicants can find more information, eligibility requirements and the official application form at www.ThanksUSA.org. Applications will be accepted through May 30, 2006. Source: Militaryconnection.com website.

DD-214 Now Available Online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access their DD-214 online: vetrecs.archives.gov. This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records center's mailroom processing time. Source: Military.com website.



Answers to Issue 2 Newsletter

6	8	5	4	7	3	1	2	9
1	9	2	8	5	6	7	4	3
3	7	4	1	9	2	6	5	8
9	2	6	5	1	8	3	7	4
5	3	7	6	2	4	9	8	1
4	1	8	7	3	9	5	6	2
7	4	3	9	8	5	2	1	6
2	6	1	3	4	7	8	9	5
8	5	9	2	6	1	4	3	7

Was this information helpful? Do you have a best practice or story you will like for us to highlight? Email your request, comments and/or practices to dana.ivory@us.army.mil.

Sudoku

	1						5	
6		2					1	9
	5		3		9		8	
			7	8	6			
	4			2			9	
			9	4	3			
	6		4		8		7	
3		4					5	2
	9						3	

The goal is to fill in the empty cells, one number in each so that each column, row, and region contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once. Answers will be in the next upcoming issue. Source: U-Turn; Winter 2005

Virginia FAC Locations and Personnel

Family Assistance Centers (FAC) State Tina.harrison@va.ngb.army.mil

FAC:

1LT Duffer
SSGT Von Ferreira
Emergency: (800) 542-4028
(434) 298-6114
Von.ferreira@va.ngb.army.mil

Lynchburg FAC

Mrs. Annette Prough
(434) 582-5167 *13
(540) 521-0966 (M)
Annette.prough@va.ngb.army.mil

Manassas FAC

Mrs. Kat Higgins
(703) 392-8858 *41
(703) 554-5520 Kat.higgins@us.army.mil

Norfolk FAC

Mrs. Tina Harrison
(757) 455-0829 *812
(434) 294-1237 (M)

Richmond FAC

Ms. Cheryl Moses
(804) 228-5106
(804) 380-6342 (M)
Cheryl.moses@va.ngb.army.mil

Roanoke & Rocky Mount

Mr. Darin Black
(540) 983-6826
(540) 521-0970 (M)
darin.black@va.ngb.army.mil

Sandston FAC

Mrs. Tricia Riggs
(804) 328-3004 *811
(804) 380-6343 (M)
Tricia.riggs@va.ngb.army.mil

Staunton FAC

Mr. Maurice Harrison
(540) 332-7859
(540) 292-2636 (M)
Maurice.harrison@va.ngb.army.mil

Virginia Beach FAC

Mrs. Tammy McGuigan
(757) 961-6545
(757) 353-9621 (M)
Tammy.lancaster@va.ngb.army.mil

Chatham, Danville, Martinsville & South Boston

Ms. Knyla Robin Harris
(434) 432-7228
(434) 770-3284 (M)
Knyla.harris@va.ngb.army.mil

