

Families in Focus

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VIRGINIA ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Family Programs Staff

LTC Thomas Morgan
J1 Director
thomas.morganiii@us.army.mil

1LT Karen Guadalupe
Interim SFPD/ SARC Coordinator
(434) 298-6260
karen.bland@us.army.mil

Angeli Wade
Wing Family Coordinator
(804) 864-7036
angeli.wade@langley.af.mil

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

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

Tina Harrison
FAC Coordinator
(757) 455-0829 *812
tina.harrison@us.army.mil

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

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Message from the J1

On August 1st, I began the rewarding responsibility of serving the Families of the Virginia National Guard as the J1, Director of Manpower and Personnel. I thank COL Marie Mahoney for the exceptional programs developed by the Family Programs staff under her leadership and her dedication to ensuring my transition. Our first year together will include many of the programs that have served our Families so well and some additions as well. The calendar also entails the anxiously anticipated opportunities to reunite our largest number of deployed Soldiers and Airmen to date with their Families. We will also work together to provide

the resources and support required for those that will mobilize to continue our Commonwealth's distinguished support of our Nation's defense. I look forward to meeting those who will attend the training in Staunton on November 10-11 as well as those who will be at the Holiday Celebration performances the final week of November. Thank you for the support of our Soldiers and contributions you make for our Virginia National Guard. I wish you a safe and happy start to the Holiday Season.

LTC Thomas Morgan
J1, JFHQ-VA


Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)

The demands on military members and their families are not only increasing, but are becoming more complex. Military families sacrifice their personal comfort and experience tremendous upheaval when soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Reservists and National Guard members are called to serve our country here and abroad. Children are especially vulnerable when separated from parents due to deployments. Their unique developmental perspective and limited life experience put them at a heightened risk for emotional distress during the separation.

With this in mind, on 10-11 October 2007, teachers, educators and guidance counselors from 7 different counties in the Lynchburg and surrounding areas came together for the 1st Military Child Education Coalition, sponsored by the Virginia National Guard and the Virginia National Guard Foundation. This event was held in Rustburg VA at the Campbell County Technical Center. This conference was designed to bring awareness, sensitivity and to educate teachers, guidance counselors and principles of the challenges our military youth face during the different stages



Guidance Counselors brainstorming possible local resources to benefit Guard and Reserve children within Virginia as part of the MCEC training

Continues on page 3 

November 2007

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 <i>FRG Training</i>
11 <i>FRG Training Veteran's Day</i>	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Holiday Celebration

Upcoming Events

Basic and Advance Family Readiness Group (FRG) Training

Date: 10-11 November 2007
Location: Stonewall Jackson Staunton, VA

Holiday Celebration

Date: 27 November 2007
Location: Highlands Fellowship Church
22417 Watauga Road
Abingdon, VA

Dates: 28 November 2007
Location: Memorial Baptist Church
224 Taylor Street
Staunton, VA

Dates: 29 November 2007
Location: North Main St. Baptist Church
2818 North Main Street
Danville, VA

Dates: 30 November 2007
Location: Swift Creek Baptist Church
7511 N Spring Run Road
Richmond, VA

National Guard Offers Parents a Deployment Guidebook



**OUR
SONS
OUR
DAUGHTERS**
A NATIONAL GUARD
PARENT'S
GUIDEBOOK
TO DEPLOYMENT
BY PAULA SUMRALL



The National Guard Bureau has published a guidebook for parents and grandparents of National Guard Soldiers and Airmen called *Our Sons, Our Daughters - A National Guard Guidebook to Your Child's Deployment* written by Paula Sumrall, a senior Guard spouse. This book offers timely and relevant tips for the parents of National Guard members, whether they are new to the deployment process or seasoned veterans themselves.

Often information offered during pre-deployment preparation focuses on spouses. Young single Soldiers may overlook helpful information that their parents may need. This guidebook is full of information, advice and stories from parents who have had their Soldier deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The guidebook also contains employment information specific to the Guard and Reserve. As the Global War on Terrorism

continues, parents, grandparents and Families are helping each other by sharing their experiences with other Families. The guidebook is available on the National Guard Bureau website, at: http://www.ngb.army.mil/resources/downloads/Parents_guide.pdf.

Source: My Army Life Too website

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) continues

of the deployment cycle. It outlined the common and not so common reactions that children may exhibit when faced with the deployment of a parent or caregiver. These reactions were broken down by age group and suggestions for intervention and guidance for these children was offered.

The primary MCEC presenter was Paul Callen who was assisted by Deanna Parkes and Liz Smith. Family

Program's Youth Coordinator, Kay Baber was on hand and spoke with the attendees about different programs that are currently available for Military children and offered numerous resources for the educators to utilize. Mrs. Baber presented the attendees with a 17 page booklet titled "Virginia Supporting Military Children". This booklet is packed with information pertaining to deployments, resources available and a section on frequently asked

questions by educators.

Family Programs hopes to conduct future MCEC workshops throughout our State in the up coming year. It is very important that we as family members make our schools aware that these programs are available and encourage the school leadership and teachers to attend. Watch for announcements on future workshops in upcoming editions of the "Families in Focus" newsletter.

'Active Duty' Alerts Help Protect Military Personnel from Identity Theft

The last thing you want to worry about while you're on deployment is someone assuming your identity to commit financial fraud. Now, you don't have to. Amendments to the Fair Credit Reporting Act allow you to place an "active duty alert" in your credit report. According to the Federal Trade Commission, one of the agencies that enforces the FCRA, the alert requires creditors to verify your identity before granting credit in your name.

Your credit report contains information on where you live, how you pay your bills, and whether you've been sued, arrested, or filed for bankruptcy. Nationwide consumer reporting companies sell the information in your report to creditors, insurers, employers, and other businesses that use it to evaluate applications for credit, and a host of other activities, including insurance, employment, or renting a home.

Your credit report can be a tool to help you guard against - or discover - identity theft, which occurs when someone uses your personal information - like your name, your Social Security number, or your credit card number - to commit fraud. Identity thieves may use your information to open a new credit card account in your name. Then, when they don't pay the bills, the delinquent account is reported on your credit report. Inaccurate or fraudulent information could affect your ability to get

credit, insurance, or housing, now or in the future. People whose identities have been stolen can spend months or years cleaning up the mess the thieves have made of their names and credit records.

If you are a member of the military and away from your usual duty station, you may place an "active duty alert" on your credit report to help minimize the risk of identity theft while you are deployed. When a business sees the alert on your credit report, it must verify your identity before issuing you credit. The business may try to contact you directly, but if you're on deployment, that may be impossible. As a result, the law allows you to use a personal representative to place or remove an alert. Active duty alerts on your report are effective for one year, unless you request that the alert be removed sooner. If your deployment lasts longer, you may place another alert on your report.

To place an "active duty" alert, or to have it removed, call the toll-free fraud number of one of the three nationwide consumer reporting companies: Equifax, Experian, or Trans Union. The company will require you to provide appropriate proof of your identity, which may include your Social Security number, your name, address, and other personal information.

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285;
www.equifax.com

Experian: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742);
www.experian.com

TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289;
www.transunion.com

Contact only one of the three companies to place an alert - the company you call is required to contact the other two, which will place an alert on their versions of your report, as well. If your contact information changes before your alert expires, remember to update it.

When you place an active duty alert, your name will be removed from the nationwide consumer reporting companies' marketing lists for prescreened offers of credit and insurance for two years - unless you ask that your name be placed on the lists before then. Prescreened offers - sometimes called "preapproved" offers - are based on information in your credit report that indicates you meet certain criteria set by the offeror.

To learn more about identity theft and your credit rights under the FCRA and the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, visit ftc.gov/credit.

Source: Federal Trade Commission website- <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/dutyalrt.shtm>

REFRESHMENTS!

VIRGINIA

ARTS & CRAFTS!

**NATIONAL GUARD
HOLIDAY CELEBRATION**

VISIT WITH SANTA!



MUSIC & FUN!

Featuring Music by the 29th Army Band

Tuesday, November 27, 2007: Highlands Fellowship Church
22417 WATAUGA ROAD, ABINGDON, VA

Wednesday, November 28, 2007: Memorial Baptist Church
224 TAYLOR STREET, STAUNTON, VA

Thursday, November 29, 2007: North Main Street Baptist Church
2818 NORTH MAIN STREET, DANVILLE VA

Friday, November 30, 2007: Swift Creek Baptist Church
7511 N SPRING RUN ROAD, RICHMOND, VA

**SEE GREETINGS
FROM DEPLOYED
SERVICEMEMBERS!**

ALL PERFORMANCES

BEGIN AT 7:30 P.M.

COME JOIN US!

**SEND A VIDEO
MESSAGE TO
A DEPLOYED
GUARDSMAN!**

TRICARE Reserve Select

A Premium-Based TRICARE Health Plan



TRICARE Reserve Select

Quality Health Care for You and Your Family

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is a premium-based health plan that qualified National Guard and Reserve members may purchase. This flyer summarizes health care benefits and costs, and explains how to qualify for and purchase TRS coverage.

Benefits of Purchasing TRS

- Comprehensive health care similar to TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra
- Two types of coverage available: TRS member-only and TRS member-and-family
- Freedom to access covered services from any TRICARE-authorized provider or hospital
- Access to military treatment facility (MTF) care on a space-available basis

Qualifying for and Purchasing TRICARE Reserve Select

National Guard and Reserve members may qualify to purchase TRS coverage if they are:

- A member of the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve
- Not eligible for or enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program

Note: If you are eligible for or enrolled in the FEHB program, you are not eligible for TRS. Contact your employer's personnel office for coverage under the FEHB program.

Step 1: Qualify

- Log on to the Guard and Reserve Web Portal at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/trs/index.jsp>.
- Select "Purchase Coverage" and you will be guided through the process of selecting a start date and electing which family members you wish to enroll.
- Print the *TRS Request* form (DD Form 2896-1) and sign the form.

Step 2: Purchase

- If you qualify, you may purchase TRS coverage to begin in any month throughout the year.
- Mail your completed and signed *TRS Request* form along with the first month's premium payment to your regional contractor by the applicable deadline. (*See regional contractor information on the back of this flyer.*)
- Coverage begins on the first day of the first or second month (*whichever you select on the TRS Request form*) depending on the postmark date of your *TRS Request* form.

If you lose coverage under a non-premium TRICARE health plan and qualify for TRS, you may purchase TRS with no break in coverage. Submit your completed *TRS Request* form with an enclosed premium payment postmarked no later than 60 days after the loss of the non-premium TRICARE coverage. TRS coverage begins on the day after the loss of your other TRICARE coverage.

Note: If you are not able to complete or print the form, there may be a problem with your information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) or a problem with your eligibility. Contact your National Guard or Reserve personnel office for assistance. A list of TRS points of contact can be found at www.defenselink.mil/ra/html/tricare.html. If you experience a technical problem, contact the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office at 1-800-538-9552.



Back to School Help for Parents

With a new school year underway, this is the perfect time for parents to help ensure that their children are off to a good start. For that reason The Department of Education developed a tool kit to assist parents with their child's educational development. Empowering Parents School Box contains the following: Tips on working with your child from birth to high school; Skills children will need in preschool, elementary, middle, and high school; Ways to be involved with your child's school and teacher; Information about financial aid and scholarships; Explanations of opportunities under No Child Left Behind; and Resources Online at: www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/schoolbox.

To order a free copy online, go to: <http://www.edpubs.ed.gov/> or call toll-free 1-877-4-ED-PUBS or mail requests to: ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, Maryland 20794-1398. The Department of Education also provides these additional websites for parents: Helping with homework or school projects <http://free.ed.gov/>; National Assessment of Educational Progress Sample Questions at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/eyk/index.asp?flash=true>; Federal Student Financial Aid at: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> <<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>> ; Choosing a School for Your Child at: <http://www.ed.gov/parents/schools/find/choose/choosing.pdf>.

Family Assistance Center Locations

FAC Coordinator

Norfolk FAC
Mrs. Tina Harrison
(757) 455-0829 *812
(757) 416-2095 (M)
tina.a.harrison@us.army.mil

Manassas FAC

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

Sandston FAC

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

Staunton FAC

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

Chatham FAC

Ms. Knyla Harris
(434) 432-7228
(434) 770-3284 (M)
knyla.harris@us.army.mil

Roanoke FAC

Melody McGhee
(540) 983-6838
(540) 521-0966 (M)
melody.mcghee@us.army.mil

Abingdon FAC

Jami Kinkead
(276) 628-7698
(276) 698-8213 (M)
jami.kinkead@us.army.mil

Virginia Beach FAC

Amy Wingfield
(757) 961-6545
(757) 686-9621 (M)
amy.wingfield@us.army.mil



Emergency 1.800.542.4028