

# Families in Focus

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## Message From the J1

### Inside this issue:

Families are the strength and foundation of the Virginia National Guard. They are our most valuable resource. The Adjutant General's vision is to build upon this vital foundation by caring for our Guardsmen and their families with a Family Program system that is the benchmark for the nation. The Virginia National Guard Family Programs Office will strive to achieve this goal through community events, volunteer and command training, quality Marriage Enrichment Seminars, and Youth Programs.

Volunteer and command training is essential for the readiness of our Guard Families. Readiness is the key to having strong, self-sufficient families who are always prepared to endure deployments. The Family Programs Office offers Basic and Advance training throughout the year to arm the FRG's with information and resources needed to

support our Guard families during times of deployments and separation. Command training will also be available this coming year.

The Family Program Office is partnering with the Chaplains' Office to offer at least three Marriage Enrichment Seminars in 2007. These seminars are intended to strengthen a marriage after a Guardsman returns from deployment. The seminars will serve as a platform for couples to communicate and spend time together in a retreat-like setting.

The Youth Program is gearing up for the second annual Youth Summer Camp in June 2007. The Camp will be held at SMR, Virginia Beach. This camp allows our Guard Youth to develop social and life skills, assist in character development and formulate positive personal values while having

fun! The Youth Program will also host additional youth retreats throughout the state.

The Family Programs Office is partnering with other organizations such as the Virginia National Guard Foundation, MCEC (Military Child Education Coalition), AMVETS and the American Legion to help support our Guard Families. These partnerships, coupled with the guidance and direction of the Virginia National Guard Family Programs Advisory Council, will produce exciting events for our Guardsmen and women and help us build strong and resilient families as we continue to fulfill our mission as the Commonwealth's Guardians. I look forward to great improvements in the Virginia National Guard Family Program in 2007 and wish you and your family a happy and prosperous New Year!

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## Family Programs Office is looking for Volunteers

Volunteers (military or civilian) are needed to participate in a committee being formed for the 2007 Youth Summer Camp. If interested, please contact me to be included at the next organizational meeting. You must be able to pass a criminal background check. Organizational and planning meetings will begin in March 2007.

Contact: Kay Baber  
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# Tidewater Area FAC inducted into the Order of Molly Pitcher

On 9 December 2006 the 1<sup>st</sup> 111<sup>th</sup> FIRES BN hosted the Virginia Artillery St. Barbara's Day Dinner. This event is a traditional occasion for Artillerymen to honor the patron saint of the Field Artillery and to induct Field Artillery soldiers into the Honorable order of St. Barbara and spouses into the Order of Molly Pitcher. The Order of Molly Pitcher is to recognize spouses that have distinguished themselves through faithful and devoted service to the soldiers of the artillery community. This year two artillery spouses, Mrs. Susan Scott and Mrs. Gretchen Jones were inducted for their service and support to the artillery community.

An unusual presentation was also made at the dinner. While the Order of Molly Pitcher is normally reserved for the spouses of Field Artillery soldiers, this year LTC Michael Messick, Battalion Commander of the 1/111<sup>th</sup>, decided to recognize the two Family Assistance Coordinators serving the Tidewater area, Mrs. Tina Harrison and

Mrs. Tammy McGuigan. LTC Messick inducted Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. McGuigan into the Order of Molly Pitcher for the tireless support they have provided to the Artillery community over the past couple of years of unit deployments from the Virginia National Guard.

All of this year's inductees have consistently gone above and beyond to ensure that not only deployed artillery soldiers and their families but all soldiers and their families are well supported at all times. The artillery community will always be grateful for the service of each of these ladies, and having been inducted into the Order of Molly Pitcher will always be shown the respect of artillery soldiers whenever they enter our midst.

Article by:  
Daniel Jones  
CPT, FA  
S-1 1/111 FIRES BN

Picture submitted by  
Tina Harrison



Tammy McGuigan, VA Beach FAC, and Tina Harrison, FAC Coordinator, were inducted into the Order of Molly Pitcher by LTC Messick for their tireless support to the Artillery Community over the past couple of years.

## Commissaries Offer Military Children Program Scholarships

Applications for the 2007 Scholarships for Military Children Program, sponsored by the Defense Commissary Agency, are now available. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every location with qualified applicants. The application deadline is February 21, 2007.

Eligibility Criteria: Must be a child of active duty, retired, Guard or Reserve service

member, unmarried, under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school), and be listed by their sponsor in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). They must be attending or planning to attend an accredited college or university full-time in the fall term of 2007, or enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer into a four-year program. Applications must include an essay on "how and why" the applicant would

change a historical event.

Applications are available at 264 commissaries worldwide or can be downloaded through links at the [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com), [www.militaryscholar.org](http://www.militaryscholar.org) or [www.dodea.edu](http://www.dodea.edu) websites.

By DoD Office of Military Community & Family Policy Posted on Wednesday, November 15, 2006



## *VFW Post 9808 and the Ladies Auxiliary Hosted a Family Christmas Party for the Families of 2-224 AVBN*



**Wendy Waldeck a spouse from D Co 2/224 Av BN shares a moment with Santa at the VFW Post 9808 Christmas Party.**

Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> 2006, started off just like any other day for the families of 2-224 AV BN. They marked another day off of their calendars, indicating another day closer to their soldier returning home from Iraq. But even though this day began as any other, it would certainly not end that way!

Earlier that morning at the VFW Post 9808 in Mechanicsville, members of Post 9808 and the Ladies Auxiliary had been hard at work preparing to host a Family Christmas Party for the families of 2-224 AV BN. Just like Santa's helpers they had been busy putting the finishing touches in preparation for the arrival of the families. As the families of the 2-224 AV BN arrived they were greeted by the Ladies of the Auxiliary, followed quickly by festivities, including dining, a magic show, gifts for all the girls and boys and of course a

visit from Santa Claus himself. As the party ended, The Post Commander gave a sincere thank you to the families for theirs and their soldier's service.

Each family was given a gift of a Christmas ham, which was just one of many ways that the VFW Post 9808 has supported this unit and its families. Through out this deployment, the members of this post have been there to give support and make the way just a little bit easier for the families and their soldiers. The Post has sent care packages and sponsored individual families, just to mention a few things, and I know that the families of the 2-224 AV BN truly appreciate the outpouring of support that Post 9808 has given them.

Submitted by Tricia Riggs  
Sandston FAC  
Photo by same

## *Children of the Guard have Free Year of Boys & Girls Clubs Memberships*

America's military remains deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in record numbers. Other members of our armed forces provide disaster relief along the hurricane shattered Gulf Coast. Active Duty forces and our Reservists/National Guard are stretched nearly to their limit in this global scenario.

Citizen-soldiers from the National Guard and Reserves who were our civilian neighbors only a few months ago have now been activated from every corner of America to heed the nation's call. They are suddenly full-time military for an extended period of time. Meanwhile,

on the home front, families of those at risk await the safe return of loved ones, amidst heightened emotional, psychological and financial upheaval.

When activation of troops began, Boys & Girls Clubs of America also mobilized to serve. It is a tradition dating back to 1991 and the Persian Gulf War, when 400 Clubs joined to support 17,500 military-connected children.

Boys & Girls Clubs are uniquely positioned to offer family support services by opening their doors to children of Reservists, National Guardsmen and Active Duty

personnel living off-base. Our military families need Boys & Girls Clubs even more today, and every Club can help.

Boys & Girls Clubs are asked to open their doors and provide no-cost services to children of military personnel, and to be proactive in linking with local military units, especially Reservists, National/Air Guard and recruiters. Make them aware that Clubs are there for military children. In addition to waiving membership fees, any additional support your Club can provide (sports league involvement, field trips, camps, etc.) will go a

long way to assist families in need. To offset Club costs, program fees and staff outreach efforts, BGCA will provide Clubs with up to \$100 for each military child presented with a one-year Club membership and services. Specifics on each outreach program can be found under the Military Support tab on [www.bgca.net](http://www.bgca.net).

Article by Tim Richardson,  
Winter edition of Connections

Source: [http://www.bgca.org/connections/archives/connections\\_winter05.pdf](http://www.bgca.org/connections/archives/connections_winter05.pdf)

## *VIDITalk Video Email Launches for Deployed Soldiers, Families*

VIDITalk Corporation, a leading provider of video messaging software, announced on December 12, 2006 that VIDITalk technology has been deployed by the US Army on its Army Knowledge Online intranet portal (AKO). The AKO is the world's largest intranet, with more than 1.8 million users worldwide. VIDITalk enables military personnel and their families to easily create and exchange personal video messages (VIDIs) using the VIDITalk interface and a web camera. (1)

VIDITalk video messaging allows all deployed active-duty, National Guard, and Army Reserve Soldiers to create video messages on a computer with a webcam. The message is then stored on a server and sent to the recipient via a URL link. (2)

Upon opening an e-mail, the user clicks on the link to get streaming video and sound. The video-streaming software allows a Soldier to hear and view video email even in limited bandwidth environments, but the link can be accessed anytime, from

anywhere. (2)

Instructions are on a link on their AKO home page. Soldiers must follow the same Department of Defense security measures used for standard e-mail. Webcams will not be used in secure areas. (2)

Families with an AKO account can send video e-mails from home with a personal computer and a webcam. They can also use webcams in many of the yellow ribbon rooms on military bases. In-theater military bases typically have webcams available at cyber cafes. (2)

VIDITalk was originally deployed in Family Readiness Group facilities at domestic bases and in Europe. After successful trials it was then expanded to include units in Alaska and the Middle East. Video email proved to be very effective in keeping families connected, overcoming geographic boundaries. Troops and families can share the details

of everyday life and VIDITalk messages can be sent in a variety of playback screens including holiday themed and special events such as birthday and anniversary. (2)

"We are pleased that VIDITalk technology has been selected by the Army as its video messaging platform, enabling families to stay connected" said VIDITalk CEO, Fred Mueller. "As it does not require both parties to be online simultaneously, time zone differences are not a problem and both the troops and their families can replay messages over and over again." (1)

Source: VIDITalk website (1) and Margaret McBride (2), Special to American Forces Press Service



## *Communication for a Healthier Relationship*



While listening to the radio 30 years ago I heard an interview I will never forget that took place between the DJ and a couple who had just celebrated 75 years of marriage. The DJ asked the couple what they attributed to the success of 75 years of marriage. The old man replied, "Both Momma and I lost our hearing about 25 years ago!" Whereas this man thought it was a good thing not to hear from his wife, it is not the norm. Communication is essential to a healthy relationship! The deeper and more transparent the communication, the better off the relationship. Family and marriage counselors are well aware that poor communication leads to other issues never

coming to closure or even being discussed. This is unhealthy and will lead to marriage relationship decay. There is help available in learning how to communicate. Your chaplain can offer free counseling or you can also learn through many valuable books on the market today on how to communicate in your relationship.

To learn how to communicate better with your spouse, both of you will want to attend the Marriage Enrichment Seminars hosted by the Family Programs Office and the Chaplain's Office. These seminars are intended to strengthen a marriage after a Guardsman returns from deployment. The seminars

will serve as a platform for couples to communicate and spend time together in a retreat-like setting. The date for our upcoming Marriage Enrichment Seminars are February 24-25, 2007 and March 24-25, 2007.

For more information on our upcoming Marriage Enrichments Seminar contact:

Chaplain J.D. Moore  
434.298.6106  
Or  
Julia Alaric  
434.298.6336

Here to Serve!  
Chaplain J.D. Moore



## *Guardsmen, Reservists and their Family Members Encouraged to Nominate their Employers for the 2007 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards*

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), in conjunction with the Secretary of Defense, announced nominations will be accepted at the ESGR website for the 2007 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards.

**The nomination process opens on January 8, 2007 and will conclude on February 28, 2007.** The goal of 5,000 nominations is a relatively small number, as ESGR estimates over 200,000 employers in America employ National Guardsmen and Reservists.

To nominate their employers, National Guardsmen, Reservists, or their family members should visit the ESGR website at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil) and complete the 2007 Freedom Award nomination form. ESGR Field Committees will review the nominations and have the option to present three nominations per committee for review by the National Selection Board, which will select up to 15 recipients.

In 1996, Secretary of Defense William Perry instituted the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award under the auspices of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and

Reserve (NCESGR). The award publicly recognizes employers nominated by their employees, who voluntarily serve in the National Guard and Reserve, for exceptional support above the requirements of the USERRA Law. This prestigious award is the highest in a series of Department of Defense employer support awards that include the Patriot Award, the ESGR Above and Beyond Award and the Pro Patria Award.

Previous recipients have included Starbucks, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Sears, General Electric, DuPont, Verizon, and United Parcel Service. State and local governments and a number of America's small businesses, who are the majority of National Guard and Reserve employers, have also been recipients.

In the current environment of continuous mobilizations of National Guardsmen and Reservists, ESGR has recognized that more employers are impacted by the loss of key employees. The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award was expanded in 2004 from five recipients to now recognize up to 15 outstanding employers annually.

The 2007 recipients will be honored in Washington, D.C. at the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony hosted by ESGR on September 12, 2007.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972. The mission of ESGR is to gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve. ESGR volunteers provide free education, consultation, and if necessary mediation for employers of Guard and Reserve employees.

As the 1.2 million members of the National Guard and Reserve continue to perform an increasing number of unique missions that require extraordinary actions on the part of everyday citizens, ESGR will continue to be the informational agency for the employers of America's new Minutemen. More information about ESGR Employer Outreach Programs and volunteer opportunities are available at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil), or by calling the National Committee Office at (800) 336-4590.

Source: ESGR Press Release 14 December 2006

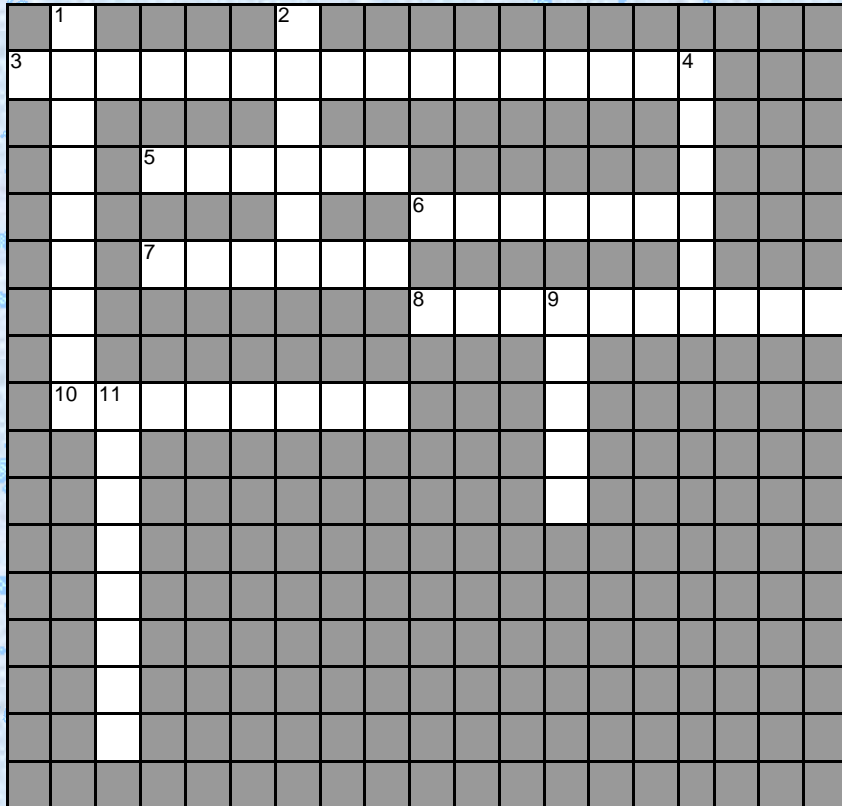


*Picture from ESGR Website*

# Crossword Puzzle

## Theme: January

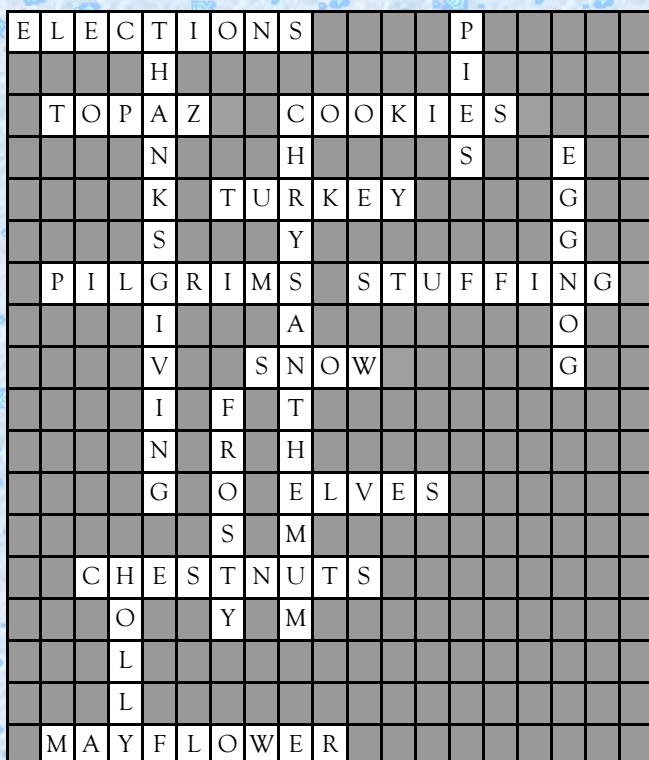
# Across



3. birthday observed on the 3rd Monday in January
5. used to remove snow from the driveway
6. a man-like figure constructed from balls of compacted snow
7. Famous snowman
8. traveling on ice with skates
10. first day in January

# Down

1. January's flower
2. worn to keep hands and fingers warm
4. January's birthstone
9. long piece of cloth worn around the neck
11. ending of the twelve days of Christmas; celebrated on 6 January



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