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# Holiday Greetings from the State Family Program Director

I would like to begin by wishing everyone Holiday Greetings and the absolute best for the upcoming New Year. I can not believe that I have been with Family Programs for an entire year! Where has the time gone? In my first year I have learned so many new things and watched my staff work non-stop providing support and resources around the clock to all of our Guard Families. I have witnessed the growth of our program beginning in January 08 when the State Family Readiness Advisory Council, an all volunteer council, was re-established. The council has met every other month to work with the Family Readiness Group Leaders in identifying issues that face our Guard Families and working on resolutions to these issues. The growth of our program has resulted in the addition of three new staff members, all part of the Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP), Kaye Carney, Pat Thorne and Cindy Blevins. The introduction of this new initiative into our program will only aid us in better serving the men and women of the Virginia National Guard.

2009 is going to be a very busy year for Family Programs as we strive to enhance our “joint” program by working not only with the Army and Air Guard but also reaching out to the other reserve components and providing services and assistance where we can. By working together, we will enhance the support and resources available to our Virginia National Guard Members and their Families no matter where they live.

But of course none of the above would have been or will be possible without the dedicated staff and Volunteers who have stood by me and supported me during my initiation into Family Programs and accepting me as “one of your own” . To each of them I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation and look forward to another year working together to support the men, women and the Families of the Virginia National Guard.

Happy Holidays

Vickie

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*Holiday Greetings for the  
Family*

*Programs Staff and the  
State Family Readiness  
Advisory Council*

## Family Resource Corner

My Army Life	<a href="http://myarmylifetoo.com">http://myarmylifetoo.com</a>
National Guard Family Program Portal	<a href="http://guardfamily.org">http://guardfamily.org</a>
After Deployment	<a href="http://www.afterdeployment.org">http://www.afterdeployment.org</a>
Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library	<a href="http://deploymenthealthlibrary.fhp.osd.mil/">http://deploymenthealthlibrary.fhp.osd.mil/</a>
Turbo TAP	<a href="http://www.turbotap.org">http://www.turbotap.org</a>
Operation Oasis	<a href="http://www.sandycove.org/docs/operationoasis.php">http://www.sandycove.org/docs/operationoasis.php</a>
Salute Our Heroes	<a href="http://www.saluteheroes.org">http://www.saluteheroes.org</a>
Military Saves	<a href="http://www.militarysaves.org">http://www.militarysaves.org</a>
My GI Bill	<a href="http://www.mygibill.org">http://www.mygibill.org</a>
Auto Repair	<a href="http://www.repairpal.com">http://www.repairpal.com</a>
Life Bridge Insurance for Children	<a href="http://www.massmutual.com/mmfg/pdf/lifebridge_eligibility.pdf">http://www.massmutual.com/mmfg/pdf/lifebridge_eligibility.pdf</a>
Military Spouse Cooperate Career Network	<a href="http://www.msccn.org">http://www.msccn.org</a>
Virginia Resource Websites	<a href="http://www.easyaccess.virginia.gov/relatedlinks.shtml">http://www.easyaccess.virginia.gov/relatedlinks.shtml</a>
National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	<a href="http://www.ncptsb.org">http://www.ncptsb.org</a>
Force Health Protection and Readiness	<a href="http://fhp.osd.mil/fhponline/">http://fhp.osd.mil/fhponline/</a>
Army Knowledge On Line	<a href="http://www.us.army.mil">http://www.us.army.mil</a>

## Upcoming Events

<b>Breakfast With Santa</b>	13 Dec 08	Hampton, VA	Angie Wade
<b>Marriage Retreat</b>	TBD Jan 09	Washington, DC	Kay Baber
<b>Single Soldier Retreat</b>	TBD Feb 09	Washington, DC	Kay Baber
<b>Couples Weekend</b>	7 Feb 09	Hampton, VA	Angie Wade
<b>Marriage Retreat</b>	TBD Feb 09	Washington, DC	Kay Baber
<b>Marriage Retreat</b>	TBD March 09	Washington, DC	Kay Baber
<b>Advanced FRG Training</b>	14 March 09	TBD	Julia Alaric
<b>192nd Fighter Wing Family Day</b>	18 April 09	Hampton, VA	Angie Wade
<b>Single Soldier Retreat</b>	TBD May 09	VA Beach, VA	Kay Baber
<b>Abington Youth Camp</b>	17 May 09	Abingdon, VA	Dana Ivory
<b>Annual Volunteer Recognition Workshop</b>	29-31 May 09	Tidewater, VA	Vickie Sais
<b>Evening Under The Stars</b>	TBD May 09	Hampton, VA	Angie Wade
<b>Marriage Retreat</b>	TBD June 09	VA Beach, VA	Kay Baber
<b>Wilderness Adventure Teen Camp</b>	28 June-2 July 09	Eagle Landing New Castle	Dana Ivory
<b>Marriage Retreat</b>	TBD July 09	VA Beach, VA	Kay Baber
<b>Single Soldier Retreat</b>	TBD July 09	VA Beach, VA	Kay Baber
<b>Junior Youth Camp</b>	3-8 August 08	VA Beach, Camp Pendleton	Dana Ivory
<b>Marriage Retreat</b>	TBD Aug 09	VA Beach, VA	Kay Baber

## Monthly Premiums Decrease for TRICARE

Effective Jan. 1, 2009, TRICARE will reduce the rates for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS). Monthly premiums for TRS individual coverage will drop 44% from \$81.00 to \$47.51, and TRS family coverage will drop 29% from \$253.00 to \$180.17.



To view the entire news release visit:

<http://www.tricare.mil/pressroom/news.aspx?fid=480>

About TRICARE Management Activity and the Military

Health System TRICARE Management Activity, the Defense Department activity that administers the health care plan for the uniformed services, retirees and their families, serves more than 9.2 million eligible beneficiaries worldwide in the Military Health System (MHS). The mission of the MHS is to enhance Department of Defense and national security by providing health support for the full range of military operations. The MHS provides quality medical care through a network of providers, military treatment

facilities, medical clinics and dental clinics worldwide. For more about the MHS go to [www.health.mil](http://www.health.mil).

## Operation Love Reunited

Operation Love Reunited is a photography organization offering free photography sessions to deploying, deployed, and reuniting military families. Each family gets 2 free sessions, whether it be one before deployment with their military member, during deployment of homefront spouse and children, and a homecoming session or post-



deployment session. The photographers have agreed to send albums to deployed military members at no cost. The photographers have to meet strict requirements to be accepted.

Their website, <http://www.Oplove.org>, is designed to help families find photographers using the military member's zip code. If any of our National Guard family members are professional photographers, here is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer your services with this organization.

Interested photographers should visit the website for more information.

### "Share the Love"

Please join The Ladies' Auxiliary VFW Department of Virginia and Stein Mart in cooperation with the VNG Family Readiness Advisory Council for an event to benefit Virginia National Guard Families and the ChalleNGe program for at-risk youth.

**Sunday, February 8, 2009** Commonwealth Centre Parkway Stein Mart, near 288 and Hull Street

Midlothian, Virginia Tickets \$20 each

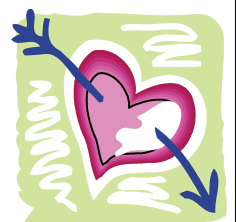
**6:00– 6:30 pm** Special Opening for National Guard Families **6:30 – 8:30 pm** All Ticket Holders

Live music, door prizes, decorating tips, informal modeling, fashion consultation, personal pampering, and refreshments

Ticket holders receive a 20% off one item coupon when entering the store.

Just in time for Valentine's Day! Buy something for the one you love while supporting two very worthwhile causes!

Contact a Richmond area VFW Auxiliary or call 804-559-2036 for details or to purchase tickets.



# Managing the Holidays during Deployment

No one has to tell you that the holidays are coming. The Christmas music has been playing in stores as they took down Halloween decorations and the holiday decorations are lined up next to the cranberry sauce and the pumpkin pie ingredients. The holidays are a challenge to our sanity and stress level every year, but if this holiday you won't be with someone you love then you may also be dreading the days ahead. Here are a few simple suggestions to help get you through.

## Be realistic - simplify and prioritize

You may not get to do or want to do everything you have always done. This might be the year to skip the cookie exchange or some of the holiday parties. Choose to do the things that will help you and your family cope with and enjoy the holidays while not over committing your time, energy and resources.

## Keep family traditions and add something new

Find that balance of doing something new to acknowledge that your loved one is far away while still holding on to those sacred traditions that give comfort and meaning to the holiday and maintain that sense of family history. Take extra pictures or video to send to your loved one to keep them connected to the holiday traditions they are missing.

## Take Care of yourself

Be careful not to over eat, over spend, or over indulge to compensate for what is missing or to numb sad feelings. Maintaining a daily routine of exercise, a regular bedtime for you and your children and eating balanced meals will help fight off the illnesses you are more prone to when under stress.

## Feel your feelings and do something about them

It is normal to feel angry, sad, lonely or numb. But you don't have to allow these feelings to ruin your holidays. Acknowledge your feelings and give yourself permission to feel them so you can move on. Find creative outlets to vent strong emotions, watch a sad movie to have a good cry, call a friend to meet for lunch helps lessen loneliness.

## Connect with others and find support

Knowing you are in a unique situation that only a few experience can be isolating and lonely. No one really knows what you're going through unless they have been there themselves. Connecting to other military families at the holiday party or the FRG meeting for camaraderie and support will help you feel less alone.

## Help children cope

Children need your time, attention and patience to manage the holidays, not more gifts or activities. Talking openly with them provides the opportunity to share feelings, identify problems and create solutions as a family. This will build strong bonds and promote resiliency in you and your children.

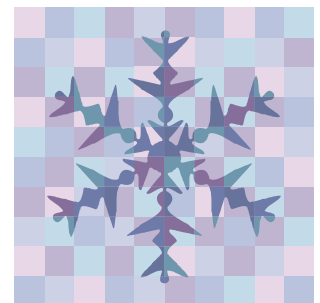
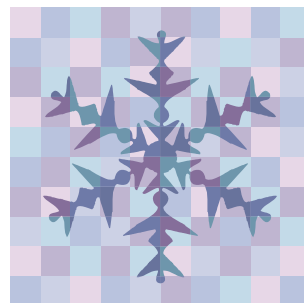
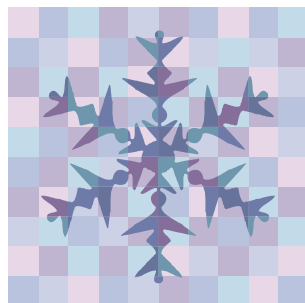
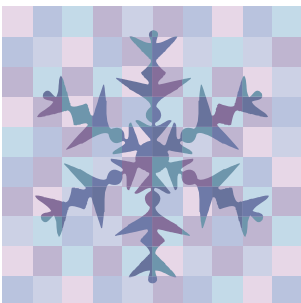
## Be Courageous - ask for help

It is natural to want to "be strong" and take care of yourself and your family. But true strength is acknowledging that you could use some help and in having the courage to ask. Whether it is with practical needs, (hanging lights or babysitting children while you go shopping) or for emotional support and counseling to get you through the long days and nights ahead there is plenty of help available – but you have to ask.

Who can you call for help?

**Military OneSource - (800) 342-9647 - 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.**

**Pat Thorne Military Family Life Consultant (434) 414-4827 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm**



## Holiday Greetings to VA Air National Guard

By Angeli Wade, Wing Family Program Coordinator

Greetings to all of our Guard families! It has been a while since I have updated you on what is happening in the Virginia Air National Guard. It has been an exciting time.

Many of you have heard that the 192d Fighter Wing became part of the Air Force's "Total Force Integration" with our move to Langley AFB in Hampton, VA. It has now been a one year since the entire 192d Fighter Wing moved from Sandston, VA," almost "leaving behind a community we loved and who supported us throughout our fifty- plus years . Most of our 192d Fighter Wing families chose not to make the move to the Hampton roads area and they are still primarily located in the greater Richmond area. Our community partners are more important to us now than ever before and we will continue to reach out to them whenever we can to say thank you for being our partners.

As we were moving, the 192d Fighter Wing went into "C-5" Status, which meant that we were not deploying around the world until the move was complete. We gave up our F-16s to fly F-22s, the most powerful fighter in the Sky. It is a beautiful plane.

This year, we are "back in the bucket" and are preparing

to join our Active Duty counterparts in training and in the fight, as we have always done. Even as I write, we have about 45 members of the unit already over the pond supporting the mission. We are back to business as usual.

What this means for our families is that the geographic distance from the Unit's "home base" at Langley AFB and their personal "home base" communities has created some new challenges. Our ability to get together for activities and events will take some will-power and determination to make it happen successfully.

We will be having our first big **Holiday party on Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 pm to 5:00 P.M at the**



**Youth Center at Langley AFB.** This event will be worth the 1 hour scenic drive from Richmond and surrounding communities. Mr. and Mrs. Santa will be present as well as a local balloon artist and face painter, and a DJ to keep the holiday atmosphere rolling along. We

will also have a professional photographer to capture your Air National Guard family memories. But the most exciting feature will be that the heavy hors d'oeuvres catered by our own retiree, Lawson Osborne.

As we kick off our Holiday Season, we send out a wish for your holidays" to be filled with all of the warmth of the season and a New Year bright with joy!"

## New Law Aids Debit Relief for Guard and Reserve

The new National Guard and Reserve Debt Relief Act of 2008 (public law 110-438) will ease bankruptcy rules for Guard and Reserve members who have served as active-duty Soldiers. . The law prevents courts from dismissing bankruptcy cases based on means-testing if the Guard or Reserve member has been on active duty since Sept.11,

2001 and was active for more than 90 days. The law is effective through the first year and a half following the Soldier's return home. The full text of the new law is available at the Library of Congress' Thomas website at

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:s.03197:>

## Military Job Fairs Jan-March 2009

**JAN 27, 2009** PATUXENT RIVER NAVAL AIR STATION JT Daugherty Conference Ctr, 22111 Three Notch Rd, Lexington Park, MD (across from Gate 1) Tele 301-863-9345x103 3pm-7pm

**MAR 10, 2009** FREDERICKSBURG, VA Ramada, 5324 Jefferson Davis Hwy, 22408 Hotel Tele 540-898-1102 Location subject to change. 3pm-7pm

**MAR 27, 2009** KING GEORGE, VA - Citizens Center Building, 8076 Kings Hwy (15 min from Dahlgren Navy Base, 40 min from Quantico, 1 Hr from Pax River) 10am-2pm

## Red Cross "Holiday for Heroes" Program 2008

The American Red Cross is pleased to announce that it will sponsor a national "Holiday Mail for Heroes" program in 2008 as it did in 2007! Last year the Red Cross reviewed and distributed over 600,000 cards to our wounded service members at hospitals around the country and overseas. This year we want to expand who is reached with the holiday greeting cards to include not only our wounded warriors, but all service members and their families, as well as veterans. Our goal is to reach 1,000,000 persons this year to show our appreciation for their service and wish them well over the holiday season.

### Holiday Mail for Heroes

**P.O. Box 5456**

**Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456**

Please do not insert photos, money, religious articles

(i.e.-rosary beads, prayer cards, etc), glitter, 'snow' or like items in cards as these items will be removed during the reviewing process.

Phone cards or gift cards will not be accepted with cards. Those wishing to **send calling cards or gift cards/certificates** should go to <http://www.aafes.com>, scroll down to "AAFES Community Connection" and click on "Help Our Troops Call Home" or "Gift Cards/Certificates for Our Troops" in order to send such items

No 'Care Packages' will be accepted at this address. Those wishing to **send care packages** should go to <http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.com> and click under "Homefront Groups" to find out how to send care packages.

## Military OneSource Financial Consultation

Face to Face Financial Consultation: Beginning November 17, Military OneSource will expand our service offerings to include referrals to face-to-face, short-term, solution--focused financial counseling to address common financial concerns, in most locations across the country. By partnering with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC), a non-profit organization that provides a wide variety of financial education and counseling services through a nation-wide provider network, Military OneSource can provide service members and their families with in-person financial help at a location convenient to them. The new services may include financial counseling for serious housing issues, credit problems requiring debt management plans, and telephonic financial counseling when appropriate. It's im-

portant to note that these new financial counseling options will augment the various financial services already available through Military OneSource and military installations. For those unable to attend face-to-face counseling, or in locations where face to face counseling is not available, Military OneSource will provide telephonic financial counseling.

And here is a resource link and description for you:

The National Resource Directory, <http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org>, is the DoD's 'yellow book' of governmental and non-governmental organizations to support the wounded, ill and or injured service member, family member or care giver with recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration resources.

## Military OneSource Tax Preparation

The Internal Revenue Service realizes that military members and their families have special circumstances in filing taxes and has put in place ways to make this less of a burden.

Military OneSource offers free tax preparation and filing. It is a simple process and help you save and pay off debts! Visit <http://www.militaryonesource.com> to file your federal and state taxes and maximize your refund.

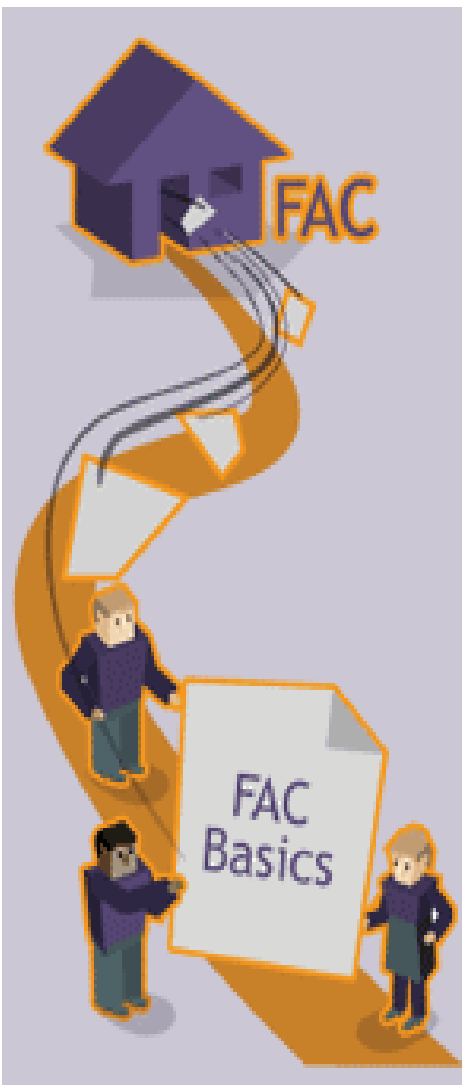


# *Family Assistance Centers*

Family Assistance Centers (FAC) were originally established to provide assistance and support to soldiers and their families at times of contingency call-up, mobilization and large scale deployment. However over the past years the FACs have branched out to assist any and all military members and their families during times of need regardless of deployment status or branch affiliation. Each FAC is staffed with a professionally trained FAC Specialist who is dedicated to providing assistance to service members and their families. Each of Virginia's FAC specialists has the added first hand experience of what it means to be either a military service member or member of a military family.

The FACs are considered one-stop shopping for those who need services and support. Through partnerships with agencies such as Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The American Legion, The Red Cross and other local and national organizations and working closely with military personnel such as chaplains, commanders, JAG officers and family readiness group leaders, the FAC specialists are able to provide the very best assistance possible. Some of the areas in which a FAC specialist can provide assistance includes but is not limited to; TRICARE, DEERS, ID cards, financial and legal assistance, service and family member employment/re-employment and crisis intervention referral.

Family Assistance Centers are located through out the state. FAC specialists are available to soldiers and family members experiencing a crisis or emergency no matter when it may occur.



## **State FAC Coordinator**

(757) 455-0829 \*812

(757) 416-2095 (M)

## **Roanoke FAC**

(540) 983-6838

(540) 718-5888 (M)

## **Abingdon FAC**

(276) 628-7698

(276) 634-7386 (M)

## **Sandston FAC closing 31 Dec 08**

(804) 328-3004 \*811

(804) 380-6343 (M)

## **Chatham/Southwest VA FAC**

(434) 432-7266

(434) 770-3284 (M)

## **Staunton FAC**

(540) 851-4164

(540) 292-2636 (M)

## **Manassas FAC**

(703) 392-8858

(540) 718-2417 (M)

## **Virginia Beach FAC**

(757) 961-6545

(757) 353-9621 (M)

## **Powhatan FAC**

(804) 598-8037

(434) 294-5764 (M)

**For Emergencies only call 1.800.542.4028**

**Serving All Military Families**