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WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday

Clear and sunny.
Low -20 High 10

Saturday

Clear and sunny.
Low -20 High 10

Sunday

Clear and sunny.
Low -15 High 10

Unrestricted visibility
NE winds 5 -10 mph

Forecast courtesy of
Det 3, 1st Weather Squadron,
Fort Wainwright, AK

Battling cold, conquering mountains at Army school in Alaska

Sgt. Trish McMurphy, USARAK PAO

Army Rangers, Navy Seals and Special Forces are all considered elite troops in the U.S. military. They are all highly trained in their fields and prepared for just about any worst-case scenario.

But what if their helicopter was redirected to a frozen mountain range in Afghanistan? Would they know how to adapt and overcome the cold and rugged terrain? If they trained at the Army's Northern Warfare Training Center in Alaska, the answer would be "yes."

Who's tough enough to train such an elite force? Soldiers like Staff Sgt. Paul Willey, an instructor at the Northern Warfare Training Center, known as the NWTC, that's who.

Willey actually experienced such a scenario when his unit was deployed to Afghanistan in 2003.

"One of the first things that happened was we got pulled into a [quick reaction force] mission. We had to relieve the Rangers from an aircraft that had gone down and it was in the mountains." Willey said, "We're out there and there is snow everywhere, and these guys have their Gore-Tex jackets over BDUs."

"There was a lot of rank and a lot of experience there," he said, "and they had no idea how to survive in the cold, but here comes Willey literally walking around the perimeter trying to modify their uniforms."

He said one of the Rangers asked him, "How do you know all this?"

"I just came from Alaska and I learned this at this school," Willey told him, referring to the Cold Weather Leaders Course.

Willey attended the course at the NWTC in 2000. He returned three years ago to become an instructor there.

He has trained Soldiers how to survive in the arctic and to traverse difficult mountainous terrain.

He has taught everything from the basics of skiing and snowshoeing to rappelling and crossing ravines.



Please see MOUNTAINS, Page 4 A Soldier crosses an icy crevasse as glacial water rushes by during mountain training at the Northern Warfare Training Center. (File photo courtesy USARAK PAO)

Wainwright officials explain COLA policies during deployments

Sheryl Nix, Fort Wainwright PAO

Since Fort Wainwright is considered an overseas location, Soldiers stationed here receive a cost-of-living allowance monthly to help offset the cost of goods and services in the area. This allowance is calculated based on the Soldier's rank, years of service and number of dependents and can represent a significant portion of Soldiers' monthly pay.

Wainwright Soldiers are most likely accustomed to seeing COLA in their monthly pay, but may not realize that the amount they receive reflects how many dependents they have in the local area as well as their other information.

With many Fort Wainwright Soldiers deploying this year, Wainwright finance officials and rear detachment commanders are working to ensure Soldiers and families have a clear understanding of how their COLA will be affected by the choices family members make about where to live and how long to travel during their Soldier's deployment.

The issue, according to William French, Fort Wainwright's Military Pay chief, involves the adjustment necessary when family members of deployed Soldiers leave the local area during a deployment.

"When command-sponsored dependents leave the local area and are gone for more than 30 days, the COLA needs to be reduced to the zero - without dependent rate," French explained. "The Soldier is entitled to the COLA no matter what as long as he is assigned here - even while deployed, so it's just the dependent rate that needs to be adjusted in this case."

French said Soldiers will still receive the bulk of their COLA even if their family members leave the area for an extended amount of time during the deployment. The adjustment is necessary since it is only authorized to supplement expenses while living in Alaska and could constitute a government fraud offense if Soldiers continue receiving the full rate even after their family members have left the local area. This applies whether family members are moving away for the entire deployment or if they're just going home for an extended visit. Any time away longer than 30 days must be reported, he said.

"We want to prevent overpayments so Soldiers are not hit with a large debt all at once," he said. "If we find out that a Soldier's dependents left the area for more than 30 days we will collect the money at that time and they will owe it in full. This could be a real hardship for military families."

Soldiers and family members can verify how much their COLA will change if family members leave the area for more than 30 days during a deployment by visiting <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaCalc.cfm>.

Following the prompts, enter Alaska, then Fort Wainwright, the number of dependents, years of service and rank to determine the current COLA rate. To determine the new amount if family members leave the area for more than 30 days of the deployment, mark "0" on the dependent section, French said.

Please see COLA, Page 5

Soldiers inducted into the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club at Bassett Army Community Hospital

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

Two Soldiers joined a select group when they were inducted into the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club at a ceremony at Bassett Army Community Hospital Feb. 28. Master Sgt. Timothy Abrahamson and Sgt. 1st Class Russell Taylor, both assigned to Medical Department Activity-Alaska, passed a rigorous examination to join the club.

The SAMC is comprised of the top two percent of the noncommissioned officers in the Army, according to Staff Sgt. Jamiell E. Goforth, president of the BACH chapter of the SAMC.

Goforth said members are selected to the club based on demonstrated leadership, professionalism and overall general military knowledge. She said it is a prestigious honor to be a member of this elite club. Inductees Abrahamson and Taylor agreed.

"The SAMC is a symbol of excellence and NCOs strive for excellence," Taylor said. "To be part of an organization that strives to improve the NCO corps and the community, it is a positive thing."

"As NCOs, we strive to be the best that we can be," Abrahamson said. "I come from a family of volunteers

and we always volunteered in the community. To me that is what the SAMC is about: Volunteering not only in the military community but the civilian community to bring a closer-knit community, where both the civilian and the military work hand in hand, because we really are one community."

In May, Goforth was the only member of the chapter at BACH.

"We are pretty excited, we will have seven members after today's induction," Goforth said. "To go from one to seven, in a period of about six months is pretty big accomplishment for us."

Goforth said that while the SAMC is in a building stage, keeping the quality of NCO who comes into the club is very important. "With that expansion comes more of an influence, more of an ability to provide more community service; to raise more funds; to contribute to our community, both at the installation level, Fort Wainwright, and also the greater Fairbanks area," she said.

Please see INDUCTION, Page 4



Command Sergeant Major, Pacific Region, Installation Management Command visited Alaska this week. See story on Page 3. (Photo by Brian Schlumbohm/Fort Wainwright PAO)

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SN/ BIRCHWOOD HOMES

Commander's column

Col. Timothy A. Jones, Garrison commander

Army Family Action Plan: Participate in the process

You have an opportunity right now to try to change things. You can make suggestions and participate in a process that in past years at the Department of the Army level has resulted in:

- a regulation change that allows shipment of vehicles to and from Alaska in a PCS
- authorization for Soldiers to participate in Thrift Savings Program
- increased BAH
- creation of the BOSS program
- creation of Tricare

The process is the Army Family Action Plan, or AFAP. It provides a way for you – Soldiers and family members – to let Army leadership know what works, what doesn't work and what you think will fix it.

AFAP was established in 1983 to ensure that standards of living in the Army reflect current times and it provides Soldiers, families, retirees, and DA civilians the opportunity to let Army leadership know what is working and what isn't. Its mission is to provide Soldiers and families with a mechanism to influence quality of life changes by alerting Army leadership to their concerns.

We will convene an AFAP conference here March 31, and as a group our delegates will decide what issues are most important and should be briefed to the U.S. Army Alaska commanding general.

The issues presented to our delegates must meet certain criteria: They must relate to Soldiers, families, retirees and civilians within our community. They must have a broad impact, not simply affect Alaska Soldiers and families. They must have measurable objectives with identifiable end products and they must be attainable and within the purview of USARAK or Department of the Army headquarters.

The issues that are not forwarded to USARAK are kept here and addressed through our local Installation Action Council. Some past successes of that council include:

- the ASYMCA's shuttle on post

- bike paths and running routes
- the conversion of the Last Frontier Community Activity Center
- railroad crossing signals on our roads

There are several ways you can be a part of the AFAP process: You can be a delegate or a volunteer and you can submit issues.

Delegates are placed into work groups to discuss issues that are submitted to the conference. As a delegate, you will need to prioritize the top three issues and present the issue to Fort Wainwright's leadership. Delegates include active-duty military, spouses, teens and retirees so that all age and interest groups may be represented.

You can work at the conference as a volunteer. Volunteers who care about the community and want to make Army life better for Soldiers, families, retirees, and DA civilians, help to make the AFAP conference a success. So be a part of the Conference staff.

You can submit issues. Don't just sit at home or stand around in your work area wishing things were different – submit your concerns and your proposed solution. Do you have a concern that relates to well-being of Soldiers and families, with a broad impact and is attainable? It may be an AFAP issue. If you don't want to participate as a delegate, but still have some ideas for improvements, you can submit your issues at any MWR facility, the AFAP program manager at Army Community Service or e-mail it to fwa.afap@gmail.com.

Visit the DA AFAP website at www.myarmyonesource.com for more information on AFAP issues.

Our AFAP conference is scheduled for March 31 at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center. Call Charles Lyons at 353-2382 for more information.

You can be the voice that makes the difference.

If you have a question or issue you would like to see addressed in the Garrison Commander's column, please e-mail the Public Affairs Office at linda.douglass@us.army.mil.



Ask the MEDDAC commander

Col. George Appenzeller, MEDDAC-AK commander

QUESTION: Can I really get free over-the-counter medications from the Medical Department Activity-Alaska pharmacies?

ANSWER: A tremendous way for you to take advantage of our healthcare partnership is to utilize the resources which we have available to improve your wellness and quality of life. One of the primary providers of these resources is our Preventive Medicine Department through their Arctic Health Link health promotion centers.

By signing up with Arctic Health Link you are able to access wonderful educational courses, such as: tobacco cessation, diabetes management, lower back pain management, cholesterol management, allergy and asthma awareness, and hypertension management. All of which help provide tools to better manage your and your loved ones' health. Additionally,

through Arctic Health Link you are able to access a Self Care (Take Care of Yourself) course which, upon completion, allows eligible TRICARE beneficiaries to obtain a select group of over-the-counter medications from our pharmacies, free of charge.

MEDDAC-AK has also launched an on-line version of the Self Care (Take Care of Yourself) class. By going to www.alaska.amedd.army.mil and clicking on the Arctic Health Link Logo on the left side, you are able to enroll and take this class for free. It is easy to navigate and I did it from my home computer, so I know that it works. The class orients you to the self-care tools highlighted in the "Take Care of Yourself" book. It also provides information that will help you self-assess your current medical needs. In addition, just like the course taught at Arctic Health Link, after passing the required examination, eligible Tricare

beneficiaries are entitled to a select group of over-the-counter medications from our pharmacies, free of charge. Just stop by the Hospital Library's Arctic Health Link desk to pick up your card.

These resources are available for eligible Tricare beneficiaries by simply calling 361-4148 at Fort Wainwright or 384-1401 at Fort Richardson. As always, your primary care provider is also available to answer any questions about specific issues and can provide you with more information on the wellness classes available.

We at MEDDAC-AK are proud to be a part of this community and are happy to help in whatever way we can.



IMCOM USARPAC Command Sergeant Major visits Alaska

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

Command Sergeant Major for Installation Management Command Pacific Region, Command Sgt. Major Karl E. Schmitt paid a visit to Fort Wainwright Wednesday to meet with Soldiers and families in the heart of the Last Frontier.

Schmitt addressed Soldiers, family members and leaders from Fort Wainwright during the Sponsorship Award Banquet, thanking them for their service and contributions. "Money is what we need to help our Soldiers. With things more expensive in this economy, the more we have Soldiers doing (in battle) the more we want to do to help them with the stresses they endure and without money it's kind of hard to do," Schmitt said. "Finding more innovative ways to get at the end result without spending money is also a challenge."

Schmitt assumed responsibilities as command sergeant major for IMCOM-Pacific Region operations in December

2010. The Region staff provides support for approximately 104,000 Soldiers, family members, retirees and more than 26,000 civilians in Alaska, Hawaii and Japan.

An article on www.imcom.pac.army.mil, earlier this year stated that Schmitt has held all NCO leadership positions and most recently served as the Brigade Task Force Command Sergeant Major for the 171st Infantry Brigade. "I've never worked at IMCOM, but I've been a customer for many years," he said.

Director of the Installation Management Command Pacific Region, Debra Zedalis said, "Command Sgt. Major Schmitt has tons of tactical experience but no BASOPS experience so he brings to us new eyes and a fresh perspective on how we (IMCOM) can and should support Soldiers and families. His love of Soldiers is visible, almost palpable, as you watch him engage and interact with them."

The command sergeant major supports Soldiers being part of the athletic programs and sporting events that are available. "I think it's good to always partner with the community we live in and do whatever breaks down the barrier. We are part of the community and if we don't take an active role in the activities, how can we say we are really a part of that community?" Schmitt said. With a laundry list of military accomplishments, awards and decorations he is most proud of becoming a command sergeant major. "As you go through the ranks as an enlisted Soldier you want to make it as a sergeant major, and I'm pretty proud I got there," he said.

"In addition, he readily engages our civilian workforce and provides them a Soldier's insight to encourage them to think outside the box, in terms of service delivery and programs," Zedalis said.

Besides his many talents and

accomplishments, she said, "he is also a master mechanic and builder. There isn't anything the guy cannot do."

After not being in these type of conditions for over 20 years, Schmitt talked about the climate and isolation. He said he had to go out and move his car this morning (at 27 below zero) and he couldn't feel his face. "I see how training in these conditions plays a huge factor when sending our Soldiers to Afghanistan, because of the terrain and temperatures. I feel the Soldiers in Alaska have to be more disciplined to work in these conditions. What amazed me is how the discipline indicators are so low, even when I was at Fort Greely, where it was brutal, barren and cold, they haven't had a DUI in 18 months and then it wasn't a Soldier, it was a contractor," Schmitt said. "I truly believe that training and living in a harsh environment does raise the discipline level."

National Prayer Luncheon

The National Prayer Luncheon is Tuesday at 11:45 am at the Northern Lights Chapel.

"The theme for this luncheon is 'Encountering God: Strength for the Journey,'" said Chaplain (Lt. Col) David VanderJagt, garrison chaplain. "The thought of this, is that God meets us in our life's journey, and he is not just a God of our history, but he is a God of our present. That thought is to strengthen us on our day-to-day journeys of our lives, including the upcoming deployment of our Soldiers and the families that are left behind. In that part of our journey, God is still there."

"We will have special music, the 9th Army Band will be there, we will have prayer for our nation, prayer for our Soldiers and prayer for our families," VanderJagt said. "We are encountering God."

The luncheon is free to meal-card holders and \$4.25 for those who don't have a meal card. While walk-ins are welcome, reservations through unit chaplains or the community chaplain's office are preferred.

For more information call Lois Armentor, 353-9825.

ALASKA POST

Home of the Arctic Warriors

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Sappers have a blast at NTC

Spc. Thomas Duval, 1-25th SBCT PAO

“Any time you are going to blow up over 3,000 pounds of C-4, Soldiers will be motivated.”

-Lt. Nate Kunz



Combat engineers of the 73rd Engineer Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, 1st Strker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division attach a rocket to more than 2,900 pounds of C-4 explosive at the U.S. Army's National Training Center Feb. 18. The rocket is part of a mine-clearing line charge or MCLC, used to clear mine fields. (Photo by Spc. Thomas Duval/1-25th SBCT PAO)

After the five-second countdown, a flash fills the sky followed by an earth-rattling shock wave and a cloud of smoke obscures a sunny day in the Mojave Desert.

The controlled explosion was the result of more than 3,000 pounds of Composition 4, or C-4, explosives being detonated by combat engineers with the 73rd Engineer Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division based at Fort Wainwright, during a road-breaching training exercise Feb. 18 at the U.S. Army's National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.

The team of “sappers” was the first unit in nearly eight years to fire a M58 mine-clearing line charge, or MCLC, at the NTC. The MCLC, often pronounced “mick lick,” is a tool used by engineers in combat to help clear roads for mobility and survivability of U.S. forces and a way to provide safe accessible roads for local nationals.

Because improvised explosive devices and roadside bombs are the weapons of choice for insurgents, MCLCs aren't used as much as they were in previous wars, when the enemy would spread a large number of mines in one area, said 1st Lt. Nate Kunz, a platoon leader with the 73rd Eng. Co.

Although many engineer units shy away from using the MCLC, it was an opportunity that Kunz and the rest of the 73rd couldn't let pass them

by.

“Any time you are going to blow up over 3,000 pounds of C-4, Soldiers will be motivated,” Kunz said. “Any time there's something with explosives, we will be there.”

As the driver of the Stryker that launched one of two MCLC rockets, Pfc. Jay Serhan, an engineer assigned to the 73rd Eng. Co., had the best seat in the house as he watched the explosion from less than a hundred yards away.

“It's a great experience and I feel very fortunate to get the opportunity to do training that not a lot of Soldiers get to do,” Serhan said. “Even if it's not used a lot I think every engineer should know how to use one. It was a great experience — one that I will never forget,” he said.

The firing of the MCLC signaled the beginning of an intense rotation of full-spectrum operations for the engineers and their comrades assigned to the 1-25th.

“The training lets Soldiers know what it's like to be on real combat missions,” Serhan said. “I'm more confident about deploying.”

“The Soldiers are starting to realize they are a lot more prepared for deployment then they may have thought before coming to NTC,” Kunz said.

The 73rd Soldiers will continue to train on mine-clearing and IED removal techniques throughout the month-long rotation - something Kunz said is vital to the 73rd's success while deployed.



Combat engineers from the 73rd Engineer Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division detonate more than 2,000 pounds of C-4 explosives during a lane breaching exercise at the U.S. Army's National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., Feb. 18. The Fort Wainwright-based 1-25th was deployed to the NTC for a month-long rotation in preparation for its deployment to Afghanistan this spring. (Photo by Spc. Thomas Duval/1-25th SBCT PAO)

The Thrift Store: Getting more bag for your buck and learning to recycle and reuse

Brian Schlumbohm, Fort Wainwright PAO



The Armed Services YMCA Thrift Store is available for Soldiers and families to shop for a variety of things or drop-off items they may no longer need. For families just arriving on station or leaving, the thrift store is a good way to pick up or pass on items that someone could use.

Karen Lindsley, thrift store manager, provided a quick overview of the store, pointing out the various rooms filled with items from books, printers and dishes to Army boots, movies and baby strollers - items once needed, but not used up.

All items have been brought in by those who've gotten their fair use from them, are in good shape and are ready to be used again. New to the area and in quick need of a set of winter items for the family? The clothes selection ranges from infants, school age and up. Everyone knows how quickly children grow out of their clothes. “If they needed and used it while they were here, it would be appreciated

and used by new Soldier families to the area again,” Lindsley said.

The store does not take consignments, but donation items brought to the thrift store are very much appreciated. Lindsley does request that donated items be brought in during hours of operation; this helps keep them out of the weather and in good condition for their next owners. Those who do not have the ability to bring donation items because of size or no transportation can call the thrift store and a staff member or volunteer can coordinate for pickup.

As the Army continues to focus on recycling, reusing and creating a “net zero” culture, the



The Armed Services YMCA Thrift Store has a variety of items at affordable prices. Recycling, reusing and creating a “net zero” culture is encouraged by the Army and the Thrift Store is just one of the resources available on Fort Wainwright. (Photos by Brian Schlumbohm/Fort Wainwright PAO)

Armed Services YMCA Thrift Store could be seen as one of the many ways of practicing it. Volunteers are always encouraged to stop by and help around the store when getting new items ready for display. Armed Services YMCA Operations Manager Layne St. John said, “Volunteers are crucial to the YMCA programs like the thrift store on Fort Wainwright.” Even though managing the thrift store takes hours of effort and organizing, Lindsey said she is mostly focused on making a difference in the Fort Wainwright community and appreciates the time and efforts of the people who do volunteer and donate.

Along with selling to patrons who venture in to shop, Lindsley also provides outreach programs tailored to quickly respond to Soldiers in need. Working with Red Cross information, unit family readiness group leaders and first sergeants, Lindsley can be contacted when requesting special help for any Soldiers or families who are new to the area or have an immediate need to fill when emergencies strike. The thrift store is ready and available to help in all situations - from permanent change of station arrivals without proper winter attire to tragedies such as loss of belongings due to fire or water damage.

Every last Tuesday of the month, the store promotes “Operation Give-Away” when Soldiers in the ranks of sergeant and below can gather 15 items of clothing or shoes for free. The last Wednesday of every month is the “Five Dollar Bag Sale,” allowing patrons to fill a bag and pay just \$5 for everything that fits in it.

All Department of Defense cardholders are welcome and can shop in the store as well: Civilians, military and veterans.

The thrift store is located on the North side of post, on the corner of 102nd Avenue and Chestnut Street. Hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Lindsley at 356-1211.

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2 x 3.0

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1 x 1.0

MOUNTAINS: Soldiers train on rugged terrain

Continued from Page 1



Soldiers prepare to scale the side of a glacier following the lead of a trainer at the Northern Warfare Training Center last summer. (File photo courtesy USARAK PAO)

"We teach (Soldiers) how to move on snowshoes. We teach them how to move on skis, and they are always going to have their rucksack," Willey said. "It is more than just a heavy piece of equipment they have to carry around. It has everything they need to survive in there."

All instructors must be able to perform the tasks of the given course to standard and then attend an Instructor Qualification Course.

"They have to be able to pitch these classes back to us, their peers, before they even get in front of a student," Willey said.

After the new instructors show they have learned the lessons they will teach, they are observed for a period of time to make sure they're ready.

Instructors also take courses above and beyond what is taught at the NWTC, Willey said, "just to make us better instructors."

They go to Anchorage for advanced avalanche courses, Joshua Tree National Park in California for advanced mountain training, and go through what Willey describes as a "[combat lifesaver] class on steroids."

While he teaches advanced skills unique to mountainous and arctic environments, Willey said he also stresses the importance of some Soldiering basics.

"We give a land navigation refresher and I have had [sergeants first class] who have failed. It's amazing, because everyone is so reliant on their GPS," Willey said. "What happens when the batteries die?"

"By the time they leave here they have a better understanding of how their equipment works and how to use it successfully," he said.

Because of their skills and expertise, NWTC instructors are sometimes called upon to assist in search and recovery missions with the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, because of their high level of training and skills in arctic and mountainous terrain.

At one recovery site, Willey said, "we put in hand lines and cut the steps and did everything to make sure [the recovery team] could traverse to the top safely."

Willey will soon be leaving Alaska for another duty assignment elsewhere. He said he will pass on his wealth of knowledge to his new Soldiers and peers, so if one day they ever encounter arctic or mountainous terrain, in Afghanistan, for example, they will know how to survive and accomplish their mission safely.



Christopher Campbell, a civilian employee at Fort Wainwright, stopped by the vanpool information meeting Wednesday to fill out an interest form and learn more about the vanpool program.

"I believe that it is a great program and will help people save money, help the environment," said Campbell, U.S. Army Alaska Military Schools coordinator. An additional benefit to vanpooling is the potential for social networking among both military and civilian workers. "Meeting personnel from other sections or offices and finding out what they do may help someone down the road accomplish a task or a job. It's not always what you know but who you know." Campbell estimated he could save around \$300 per month by using the vanpool program to travel from the Lakloey Hill neighborhood each day. Groups of 8 to 13 workers from post could "pool" together to join in the Fairbanks North Star Borough's vanpool program. Networking with Crissy Ditmore, vanpool project manager for Fairbanks and Anchorage can be the first step toward saving money, commuter drive time and wear and tear on your own vehicle. The toll free 1-800-VAN RIDE (800-826-7433) is one way to get more information. The Fort Wainwright Sustainability Officer is available to answer questions on post, dial 353-7500. (Photo by Connie Storch/Fort Wainwright PAO)

Ice Alaska features world-class artists at the largest ice art competition

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

Visiting Ice Alaska should be on every military family's "must do" list. It is an experience unique to Alaska and fun for all ages. Ice Alaska is one of the largest ice art competition and exhibitions and features work by both local and world-class artists.

Ice Alaska features a kids' park made entirely of ice. There are slides and rides for all ages, amazing mazes, and "twirlies," small bowls made of ice which children can sit in and be spun around. The park also has life-size sculptures of animals and toys to touch and climb on. There is even an ice rink to skate on, and a place to borrow skates.

There are more than 16 ice slides in the Ice Park this year, varying in length from five to 117 feet. Kids are invited to record their sliding distances on a score card provided by Ice Alaska. Each child who slides a total of 5,280 feet (one mile) or more on the various slides will receive a commendation certificate signed by Alaska's Governor Sean Parnell for his or her efforts. Children who visit the Ice Park, but cannot slide because of illness or a handicap, are challenged to score their "mile" by a math and geography quiz.

This year, as a tribute to the military community the infantry statue "Follow Me" and the "Combat Medic" statue will be sculpted and on display said Dick Brickley, chairman of

Ice Alaska. The statues "Retiring the Colors" and "The Air Force Pilot" will also be sculpted and on display for all to enjoy. The sculpting starts Saturday and is expected to take about a week.

Sunday is a great time for military families to visit Ice Alaska as it is Geico Military Appreciation Day. Day and family season passes are discounted by \$5 with a military identification card. There will be a second military appreciation day March 20, sponsored by MAC Federal Credit Union.

Planning for the event takes about 12 months and requires approximately 400 volunteers who come from around the world to do all sorts of tasks, including security, public relations, clerical support and cooking for the sculptors.

One of the volunteer activities is harvesting the ice used in the competition. To make all this happen, Ice Alaska typically harvests over 4.1 million pounds of ice from O'Grady Pond, a man-made pond used exclusively for producing ice and located close to the sculpting site. Fairbanks' exceptionally clear, brilliant ice has won the name "The Arctic Diamond" and is a favorite medium for ice sculptors.

There are two categories of competition at Ice Alaska. The single-block competition uses one block of ice which is approximately five feet by eight feet by three feet and weighs about 7,800

pounds. In the multi-block competition teams are given 10 blocks of ice to work with. Each block measures approximately four feet by six feet by three and one-third feet, and teams sculpt a minimum of 46,000 pounds of ice.

In the single-block competition the teams are made of one or two people. They have 60 hours to complete their work. Once the ice block is positioned to the sculptor's satisfaction, the sculptors are on their own. No mechanical or power devices can be used to move the ice, but artists can request the assistance of competing teams.

Multi-block teams have two to four people and have 132 hours to complete their sculptures. They are permitted to use a variety of hand and power tools and get assistance from heavy equipment operators to move the ice into its desired location. Sometimes the sculptures are more than 25 feet high.

Since 1988, there has been participation by sculptors from 39 countries. Currently there are over 150 sculptors participating in the event. In a typical year, more than 45,000 spectators, representing all 50 states and more than 35 countries of the world, pass through the gates of the Ice Park.

Ice Alaska is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and is open until March 27. For more information visit www.icealaska.com



Mark Chapin, from Fairbanks is the designer of the sculpture "Blast from the Past". When completed it will be a replica of a 1950s diner scene with waitresses on roller skates, a couple in a booth sharing a soda and a jukebox. The center piece will be a 1955 Chevy Bel Air. (Photo by Trish Muntean/Fort Wainwright PAO)



Herschel Walker speaks out on seeking help

Brian Schlumbohm, Fort Wainwright PAO

Herschel Walker, the 1982 Heisman Trophy winner and former professional football player visited Soldiers and their families at Bassett Army Community Hospital Feb. 24. Walker's NFL career included stints with the Dallas Cowboys, Minnesota Vikings and Philadelphia Eagles. While meeting with Soldiers and families of the Warrior Transition Unit, Battalion B, Walker spoke about his life, his personal experiences with mental illness and how he gained control over it.

Stacie York, vice president of the Freedom Care Program, accompanies Walker as they tour military installations throughout the United States. "Our motto is, 'if the military goes there, we'll go there.'" York said. She explained that coming to Alaskan installations during the winter months was a decision made on purpose. Both York and Walker felt that with the seasonal effects of prolonged darkness on military members and their families, the message of overcoming would be most needed.

Walker became a spokesman for the Freedom Care Program in 2008 after the company found out about his trauma-related disorder and he wanted to do some speaking about his experience. They educate and focus on letting the troops know that if they have a problem, as Walker said, "There is no shame in asking for help. I did." He tells his story in hopes that by talking about his experiences with mental illness and how he found help by seeking it out, military members will do the same.

"This is the 28th military installation we've visited so far and Herschel Walker has spoken to more than 7,000 troops," York said. "Our company provides treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction and women's issues, including military sexual trauma and other psychiatric disorders for service members; we specialize in that."

"The Freedom Care program admits about 80 service members per month at four locations throughout the country," York said. "And they treat about 30 service members from Alaska every year."

Capt. Dave Moran, an emergency room staff member at Bassett Army Community Hospital, was on hand to get his shirt signed by Herschel Walker Feb. 24 at the meet-and-greet event for Fort Wainwright Soldiers, families and civilians. "I'm a Broncos fan," Moran said, "but he's a fighter and I'm a fight fan." Walker is the spokesman for the Freedom Care Program, a company providing treatment for mental health and chemical dependency issues; with treatment specially designed to meet the needs of military members, veterans and families. (Photo by Brian Schlumbohm, Fort Wainwright PAO)

INDUCTION: Top Soldiers garner top spot in prestigious Sgt. Audie Murphy Club

Continued from Page 1

The original SAMC was started at Fort Hood, Texas, in 1986. It is a non-profit organization committed to contributing to the community. The club does charity work to provide a better life for everyone in the community. The club is named for Audie Murphy, the most-decorated American Soldier of WWII.

In addition to the SAMC induction ceremony, 20 Soldiers were inducted as noncommissioned officers. Command Sgt Maj. Marshall Huffman, command sergeant major at BACH, was the guest speaker. He said it was a momentous occasion.

"You have earned the privilege to be an NCO and to lead Soldiers," he said. "Be proud of that achievement. When you joined the Army you took your first step in being a leader. To be part of a cause, something more

important than yourself; to have a sense of belonging to a mission that is bigger than yourself, something you could be a part of that sets you a cut above everyone else and is a sense of personal pride."

"Our NCOs are the foremen of our Army," Huffman said. "They execute the plans, policies of the officers, conduct the daily business of the Army, train Soldiers and focus on standards, care and professionalism of enlisted personnel."

"I want to let the Soldiers know that I am proud of them, I am proud of the corps of noncommissioned officers, to have the Soldiers follow my footsteps as the senior enlisted advisor for Medical Department Activity-Alaska. We have some very good Soldiers who are stepping into the ranks of the NCOs.



Master Sgt. Timothy Abrahamson supervises Cpl. Heather Laymon in her work at the Pathology Lab at Bassett Army Community Hospital. Abrahamson was inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club and Laymon into the NCO corps during a ceremony on Feb. 25. (Photo by Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO)

GOLA adjusted for Family members who leave: Pay now or pay later

Continued from Page 1

"I don't know all the factors of why someone wouldn't report that their dependents were leaving," he said. "It could be that they didn't know or a Soldier didn't notify the chain of command or it could be that they decide to lie about it. But if we do find out that this has occurred, we notify the chain of command and any higher command necessary to take care of the issue. If it is determined that it happened we will make the corrections and we will satisfy the debt accordingly with the Soldier and the chain of command."

Doing the right thing when it comes to COLA is easy, he said.

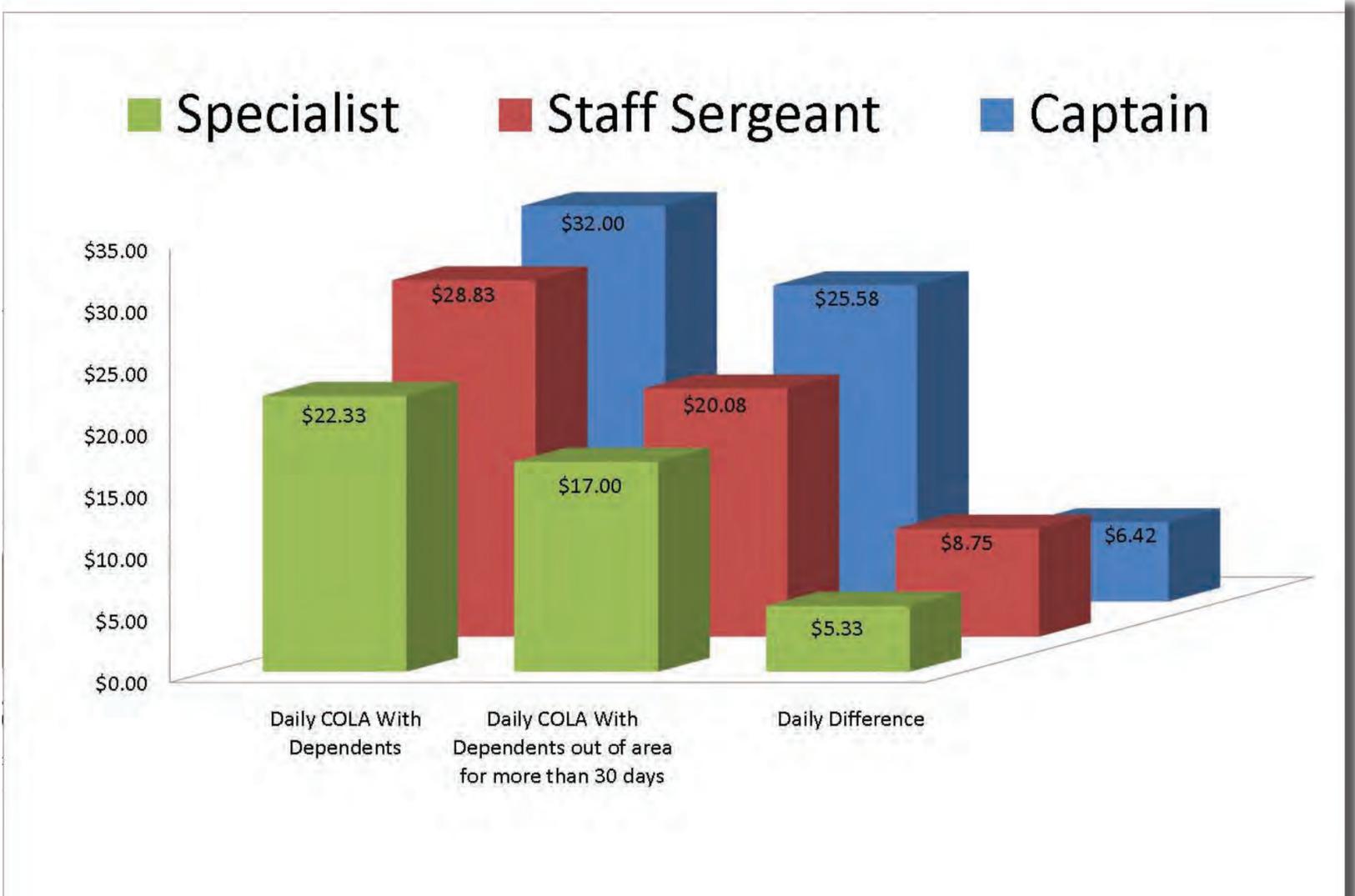
The process begins when a spouse notifies the rear detachment that she or he is planning to leave the state for a period longer than 30 days, said Maj. Matthew Hall, rear detachment commander for 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

"The rear detachment will request the spouse come in and assist in preparing the proper documentation for the COLA change," he said. "Once the family member returns to the area, the rear detachment will simply need some type of proof of their return to the state to prepare to change the COLA rate back to the full amount."

Representatives from unit rear detachments

and the installation Finance Office said they plan to work together to ensure Soldiers and families are well taken care of during the upcoming deployments.

Keeping family readiness group contacts and unit rear detachments updated about their travel plans even if families are away less than 30 days is also very important, Hall said. "It is critical that families notify their rear detachment, their FRG leader and their Family Readiness Support Assistant anytime they leave the area for any extended time wither in state or out of state. This greatly assists in passing information to the family as well as locating them if needed," he said.



what is it?
when is it?
where is it?

find it here!

Arctic Health Link

WHAT: Cholesterol Class

WHEN: 2 to 4 p.m. Tuesday
WHERE: Bassett Army Community Hospital
COST: Free for all Tricare beneficiaries
CALL: Arctic Health Link 361-4148
NOTES: Classes are by appointment only and space is limited.
Please call for more information and to schedule your class.

WHAT: Asthma and Allergy Class

WHEN: 1:30 to 3 p.m. Wednesday
WHERE: Bassett Army Community Hospital
COST: Free for all Tricare beneficiaries
CALL: Arctic Health Link 361-4148
NOTES: Classes are by appointment only and space is limited.
Please call for more information and to schedule your class.

WHAT: Tobacco Use Cessation

WHEN: 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Thursday
WHERE: Bassett Army Community Hospital
COST: Free for all Tricare beneficiaries
CALL: Arctic Health Link 361-4148
NOTES: Classes are by appointment only and space is limited.
Please call for more information and to schedule your class.

Friday - 4th

STORY HOUR & CRAFTS, 4 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-2642.

TAX CENTER OPEN, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Telephone questions welcome. For appointments, call 353-2613.

RESUME WRITING CLASS, 1 to 3 p.m. at portable building, RHQ 7. Call 353-2113.

FIRST FRIDAY ART BASH OPEN HOUSE, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Arts and Crafts Center, Building 3727. Call 353-7520.

Saturday - 5th

ENCORE STORY HOUR AND CRAFTS, 10:30 a.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-2642.

CUSTOM PICTURE FRAMING CLASS, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Arts and Crafts Center, Building 3727. Cost is \$35 and includes all materials. Must be 16 older to participate. Call 353-7520.

POOL TOURNAMENT, 6 p.m., The Warrior Zone, Building 3205. Open to DoD cardholders ages 18 and older. Call 353-1087.

CHESS CLUB, 3 to 5 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Call 353-7755.

COMPEAUS TRAIL SNOWMACHINE TRIP, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. \$75 per snowmachine driver, \$10 for additional passenger. Drivers must be 18 and older. If the temperature drops to 10 below zero, the trip will be postponed to a warmer date. Call 361-7274.

EFMP TUBING, 12:45 to 3 p.m., Birch Hill Ski Lodge, Building 1172. For Exceptional Family Members. Cost is \$3 per person per hour, \$5 per person for 2 hours. Birch Hill closes at 20 below zero. Minimum age requirement is 5 years old. Height requirement is at least 40 inches. Five and six year olds must be accompanied by an adult in a separate tube. Call 353-4243.

Sunday - 6th

STAINED GLASS WORKSHOP, 2 to 5 p.m. Arts and Crafts Center, Building 3727. Cost is \$65 and includes all materials for all sessions, March 6, 13, and 20. Must be 16 years and older to participate. Call 353-7520.

WII BOWLING LEAGUE, 2 to 4 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Sign up in advance. Call 353-7755.

Monday - 7th

ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP, 10 a.m. to noon, School Age Services, Building 4391. Transportation for families to and from the playgroup is available at Northern Lights Inn at 9:30 a.m. Call 361-7372.

Tuesday - 8th

MARDI GRAS, 6 to 11 p.m., The Warrior Zone, Building 3205. Open to DoD cardholders ages 18 and older. Call 353-1087.

ICE SKATING, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., Physical Fitness Center Ice Rink, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

DODGE BALL TOURNAMENT, 1 to 4 p.m., March 8-10. Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT MEETING, 2 p.m. For tournament March 28 - April 7. Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

Wednesday - 9th

ROCKWALL CLIMBING, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Melaven Physical Fitness Center, Building 3452. Call 353-1994.

BROOMBALL TOURNAMENT MEETING, 2 p.m. For tournament March 29 - April 8. For company level teams. Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

NEWCOMERS ORIENTATION, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Mandatory for Soldiers. Spouses and civilians are strongly encouraged to attend. Call 353-4227.

Thursday - 10th

ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP, 10 a.m. to noon, School Age Services, Building 4391. Transportation for families to and from the playgroup is available at Northern Lights Inn at 9:30 a.m. Call 361-7372.

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. All movies appropriate for children ages 3-10. Call 353-7755

WOODSHOP 101, 6 p.m., Arts & Crafts Center, Building 3727. Cost is \$35. This class is required in order to use the shop and equipment. Must be 16 years and older to participate. Call 353-7520.

Ongoing

CALLING ALL TEENS, 12 to 18 needed to participate in the Army Family Action Plan conference, March 30 and 31. Call Charles Lyons at 353-2382.

AFAP CONFERENCE - MARCH 30 - 31
Submit issues now by calling 353-2382

Alaska Post

To submit a photo, place an event or class on the calendar send an email to pao.fwa@us.army.mil no later than close of business Monday prior to the print week. The name of the event or class, date, time, location and a contact phone number must be included. For display advertising contact the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner at 459-7548.

Fort Greely lawyer captures a spot in Alaska's royal court

Dave Palmer, Fort Greely PAO



(File photo)

Fort Greely's own, the current Ms. Deltana, nearly added the title, 'Mrs. Alaska America' to her accomplishments Feb. 12 in Anchorage.

Amy Cauthen Marshall (left), United States Army Garrison, Fort Greely paralegal specialist, was named first runner-up in the pageant of 24 women from all walks of Alaskan married life.

"I still can't believe it. I never thought I'd do as well as I did. They are a group of incredible women and I feel privileged to be associated with them," Marshall said.

In her current role as Ms. Deltana she hopes this latest recognition will help her pay it forward as she is taking on the challenge of organizing this

year's Miss and Ms. Deltana Pageant.

"It is a wonderful opportunity for young women at the next level of competition. For example, Miss Teen and Miss Alaska America contestants compete for four-year scholarships," Marshall added.

An active member of the Deltana community, she is especially proud of her work with the American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life." She is the publicity and advocacy chair working with state lawmakers to legislate funding for cancer research.

"Cancer is a terrible disease that touches nearly every family in some way," she said. "Raising money funds research, and I'm confident that research will help us find a cure."

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For your information

Y AT THE MOVIES

The Armed Services YMCA program Y at the movies' offers free movie tickets. Tickets can be picked up at the ASYMCA offices, located at 1047-4 Nysteen Road between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

This weekend's movies include "The Rite" and "The Green Hornet."

OPERATION HERO VOLUNTEERS

Operation Hero is an after-school program for military kids to help with academics and coping with military life. The ASYMCA needs volunteers to help the children. The hours will be after school Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for approximately one and one-half hours. For more information contact Kelly at 353-5962.

MONEY GIVEAWAY

The Fort Wainwright Community Spouses' Club is seeking applications for their spring welfare grants. The CSC distributes funds to organizations that benefit Fort Wainwright and surrounding communities and impact soldiers and their families. The maximum grant is \$500.

For details, applications check online, www.wainwrightcsc.org

MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

The ASYMCA has discounted tickets for the military appreciation game Tuesday. Stop by their office, located at 1047-4 Nysteen Road between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to pick up your tickets.

LIFE AFTER THE ARMY

It's never too soon. Soldiers should start working with Army Career and Alumni Program at least one year out but no later than six to nine months before retirement or separation.

Starting ACAP early allows you to fully utilize the program even around your training schedule. ACAP offers classes in employment assistance training, Veterans' and disability benefits, resume writing, federal job application, starting a small business and more. Spouses are also welcome to take advantage of ACAP programs. To get started, call ACAP at 353-2113 or go online to www.acapexpress.army.mil to set up pre-separation counseling and get started immediately planning for life's next exciting adventure.

MILITARY ONE SOURCE

Military life comes with unique challenges. The goal of Military OneSource is to provide expert information - articles, booklets, CDs, DVDs and links to other resources - on how to deal with the challenges and issues military families face every day.

Help is available for military members, spouses, and families from Military One Source.

Education, relocation, parenting, stress - you name it - Military OneSource can help with just about any need. Available by phone or online, this free service is provided by the Department of Defense for active-duty, guard, and reserve service members and their families.

For more information call (800) 342-9647 or visit the website www.militaryonesource.com

NEWS TIP LINE - CALL 353-6700

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ASYMCA NOW HIRING

The Armed Services YMCA is looking for lead facilitators to work with children two or three times a week for 1.5 to 2.5 hours a day in the after-school Operation Hero program for 10 weeks at Arctic Light Elementary on Fort Wainwright. The hourly pay rate is \$12.50.

For more information, call Kelly at 353-5962.

AER CAMPAIGN

The 2011 Army Emergency Relief Campaign for the installation begins Tuesday and continues through May 15. Training for key workers and unit representatives begins next week. For more information contact Russell Williams, garrison AER officer, 353-7453 or visit the website www.aerhq.org.

FATHER-DAUGHTER BALL

The annual Father-Daughter Ball is slated for April 3 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Westmark Hotel. The cost is \$25 per family, no matter how many people are in the family. For more information on where and when to purchase your night out on the town with your princess, call the ASYMCA, 353-5962

DINING FACILITY OPEN TO CIVILIANS

The North Star Dining Facility located in Building 3416 is open to anyone working on Fort Wainwright, including contractors, during work hours.

Lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the cost is \$4.25; free for meal cardholders.

The dining facility serves specialty meals during lunch Thursdays.

For more information, call 353-2060.

NATIONAL PRAYER LUNCHEON

The National Prayer Luncheon takes place Tuesday, 11:45 p.m. at the Northern Lights Chapel. The theme this year is "Encountering God: Strength for the Journey."

The luncheon is free to meal cardholders and \$4.25 for those without a meal card. While walk-ins are welcome, reservations through unit chaplains or the community chaplain's office are preferred.

For more information call Lois Armentor, 353-9825.

CSC LUNCHEON

The Fort Wainwright Community Spouses Club is hosting a luncheon April 8 at the MorrisThompson Cultural and Visitors Center. The theme for the April event is "Summer in Alaska" which will provide an overview of summer activities in the Fairbanks area over the lunch hour.

Everyone is welcome. See the CSC webpage, www.wainwrightcsc.org for more information and to RSVP.

Members of the CSC are invited to get involved by becoming part of the CSC Board. There are four elected positions available and several to be appointed.

For more information visit the CSC website at www.wainwrightcsc.org

APP AVAILABLE

The United States Army's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command has an app available for the iPhone. Access MWR on the go with quick access to Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Learn more about the command, the Army Family Covenant and how to donate to the Army.

TAX CENTER OPEN

The Tax Center is open. Active-duty, mobilized Reserve, retirees and the family members of these sponsors who have simple personal income tax returns are eligible for tax assistance service.

Returns may be filed electronically whether you are getting a refund or you owe taxes. Only taxes prepared by a Fort Wainwright Tax Assistance Center staff member can be electronically filed at the Tax Assistance Center.

The Tax Assistance Center is located in Building 1049-4 Gaffney Road near the Law Center on the north side of Fort Wainwright. Both appointments and walk-ins are available, but customers having an appointment take priority.

For more information or an appointment call 353-2613.

ACAP HAS MOVED

The Army Career and Alumni Program offices have relocated to modular Building RHQ 7 until further notice. For more information, call 353-2113.

TRIAL DEFENSE SERVICE RELOCATED

The Trial Defense Service has temporarily relocated to Building 3025 is the same building as the photography shop, but on the other side.

The hours of operation are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. This is a temporary move pending the final renovation of building 1051 which is expected to be completed this summer.

For more information call Trial Defense Service is 353-6522.

JOB FAIR

The Alaska Dept. of Labor will host a Career Expo and Job Fair March 21 at the Carlson Center from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This event will allow job seekers to discover apprenticeship, training and education opportunities, explore new career paths and possibly interview on site.

Those seeking employment should bring their resume and dress for an interview.

For more information contact Theresa Quakenbush at 451-5958.

ALASKA POST HOME DELIVERY

Housing residents who no longer want home delivery of the Alaska Post should e-mail the Public Affairs Office at pao.fwa@us.army.mil or call 353-6780.

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