

ALASKA POST

Home of the Arctic Warriors

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Fort Wainwright, Alaska

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AT A GLANCE CAMP ADVENTURE



Adding more to summer programs
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NORTHERN EDGE



Executing the next scenario
More on page 5

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday
Mostly cloudy
Chance of showers
Low 50 High 70
West winds 10 mph

Saturday
Mostly cloudy
Chance of showers
Low 55 High 70
Light winds

Sunday
Mostly cloudy
Chance of showers
Low 50 High 75

Monday
Mostly cloudy
Chance of showers
Low 50 High 75

Forecast courtesy of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Local student receives Fort Wainwright scholarships



Sophie Marcinkowski (center) flanked by her mother Janis and father Robert "Ski" Marcinkowski, operations specialist, USARAK G-3, proudly displays the plaque she received during the presentation of the Scholarship for Military Children at the Fort Wainwright Commissary June 22. A poster with Marcinkowski's photo will be displayed at the store entrance for a year. (Photo by Allen Shaw/Fort Wainwright PAO)

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

A graduate of Lathrop High School was awarded two scholarships on Fort Wainwright recently. Sophie Marcinkowski, daughter of Janis and Robert Marcinkowski, received the Community Spouses Club Scholarship for \$1,250 at the Northern Lights Chapel, April 27 and the Military Child Scholarship, which was presented at the

Commissary by Lori McDonald, store director, Fort Wainwright Commissary, June 22.

The Scholarship for Military Children Program was created in recognition of the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and to celebrate the role of the commissaries in the military family community.

See STUDENT, page 5

Love at first sight: An Army story

Spc. Thomas Duval, 1-25th SBCT PAO

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan - When most Soldiers deploy from their home station, they leave behind more than their daily routines. Many of them leave behind friends, wives, sons, daughters and husbands, and in many cases, communication back home to their loved ones can become a rare luxury and somewhat of a reward.

But that's not the case for 1st Lt. Aaron Frazier and his wife 1st Lt. Heather Frazier, both personnel officers assigned to the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division stationed out of Fort Wainwright, who are currently enjoying the opportunity to see each other every day during their deployment to Afghanistan.

See ARMY STORY, page 4

On 'Moly' Ridge

Spc Reese Von Rogatz, 16th CAB PAO

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska-Donnelly Training Area, Molybdenum Ridge, elevation 1,200 meters. Two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters swoop down on a landing zone. Soldiers and Airmen jump out, take a few strides and drop to prone position, rifles at the ready.

It's a quarter past two on a Monday afternoon and the right boot of a nearby Soldier is in a depression filled with water, ankle-deep. A light rain wets his face, fog shrouds nearby peaks. Mist swirls about the mountaintops in the distance obscuring the surroundings. The Black Hawks leap skyward with a roar, air wash from rotors pressing bodies into moist tundra muskeg.

Part of Northern Edge 2011, a joint-operations exercise hosted by Alaskan Command June 13 through 24, the air assault landing is a prelude to five hours of integrated training for the Army joint fires observers and Air Force joint terminal attack controllers making up the eight-man team.

"Our focus is on basic movement, reacting to contact and executing scenarios related to core tasks," said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Sean Field, NCOIC for the training mission from the 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron.

See NORTHERN EDGE, page 5

Catch the magic - Camp Adventure comes to Fort Wainwright

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

Fort Wainwright Families enrolled in Child and Youth Services programs may see some unfamiliar faces during summer programs.

CYSS has invited Camp Adventure Child and Youth Services to Fort Wainwright youth and welcomes local families to come out and experience what they are here to offer.

Camp Adventure has been providing youth recreation programs since 1985 and is headquartered at the University of Northern Iowa, with satellite training locations throughout the United States. Here at Fort Wainwright they are enhancing the CYSS summer programs already planned.

Here at Fort Wainwright, "they are supplementing with new ideas, boosting morale in a sense, the energy that they bring in makes the environment more positive, more appealing," said Rizza Asuncion, CYSS Services Coordinator. "(They) give the staff on-the-job training, give them new ideas."

July 4, 1776, a declaration of freedom

June 7
Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, receives Richard Henry Lee's resolution urging Congress to declare independence.

June 11
Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston appointed to a committee to draft a declaration of independence. American army retreats to Lake Champlain from Canada.

June 12-27
Jefferson, at the request of the committee, drafts a declaration, of which only a fragment exists. Jefferson's clean, or "fair" copy, the "original Rough draught," is reviewed by the committee. Both documents are in the manuscript collections of the Library of Congress.

June 28
A fair copy of the committee draft of the Declaration of Independence is read in Congress.

July 1-4
Congress debates and revises the Declaration of Independence.

July 2
Congress declares independence as the British fleet and army arrive at New York.

July 4
Congress adopts the Declaration of Independence in the morning of a bright, sunny, but cool Philadelphia day. John Dunlap prints the Declaration of Independence. These prints are now called "Dunlap Broad-sides." Twenty-four copies are known to exist, two of which are in the Library of Congress. One of these was Washington's personal copy.

Read more at, www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_history.html

July 5
John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, dispatches the first of Dunlap's broadsides of the Declaration of Independence to the legislatures of New Jersey and Delaware.

July 6
Pennsylvania Evening Post of July 6 prints the first newspaper rendition of the Declaration of Independence.

July 8
The first public reading of the Declaration is in Philadelphia.

July 9
Washington orders that the Declaration of Independence be read before the American army in New York.

July 19
Congress orders the Declaration of Independence engrossed (officially inscribed) and signed by members.



August 2
Delegates begin to sign engrossed copy of the Declaration of Independence. A large British reinforcement arrives at New York after being repelled at Charleston, S.C.



This is the third year Amber Mitchell has been a part of Camp Adventure. This year she is assigned to the Youth Center where she and the teenagers did an arts and crafts project June 24. (Photo by Trish Muntean/ Fort Wainwright PAO)

See MAGIC, page 4

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Commander's column

Col. Timothy A. Jones, Garrison commander

Commander's farewell

It has been my great pleasure to have served as the garrison commander for U.S. Army Garrison Fort Wainwright for the past three years. Those years have been among the best of my 27-year career – due in large part to you and the hard work you do every day.

We've seen numerous changes over these three years.

We've gone from an indirect-reporting garrison, subordinate to Fort Richardson, to a stand-alone direct-reporting garrison under Installation Management Command's (IMCOM) Pacific Region. That meant an expansion of responsibilities and services, and more civilian positions to serve the Soldiers and family members here.

Our garrison staff successfully supported two deployments and one redeployment of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and several deployments and redeployments of various aviation units from the 16th Combat Aviation Brigade, as well as other separate units in that time. During the deployments our staff took care of the Family members with special offers for child care, counseling and emotional support and special events to help keep morale on a positive bent.

Our last three years have brought us new construction – housing, barracks and administrative space, roads, maintenance facilities and more. We have changed intersections and added traffic lights to ease congestion at our intersections. We renovated the Last Frontier Community Activity Center – some of that is still happening – and Nugget Lanes Bowling Center. We look forward to new construction in the coming years of two hangars, a new gas station, and a year-round clubhouse at the golf course that will also support cross country skiing and other winter activities.

We entered into a partnership with Actus-Lend Lease and North Haven Communities to manage our family housing. Our Soldiers and families have new modern quarters in pleasant, well-landscaped neighborhoods, and more new homes are being built every day.

We also started a partnership with Doyon Utilities, the largest utility privatization in the Army. They now manage all of our utilities and have made upgrades to the power plant for more efficient heating and electric service.

Last year we installed new head-bolt outlets for plugging in our vehicles. The new outlets cycle on and off so vehicles are not pulling electricity all day long when they are plugged in during the winter months. The result was a savings to the garrison of about \$150,000.

Our recycling partnership with K & K Recycling has proven to be a resounding success.

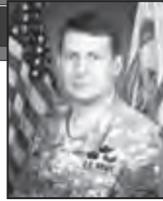
We entered into a partnership with K & K Recycling and North Haven Communities, our housing partner, to dispose of paper, plastics, glass and some metal. Since we started our recycling efforts late last summer, we have collected more than 713,000 pounds of materials. Fort Wainwright realizes a profit on some of the recycling, and thus far we have \$136,795 to spend on installation programs to improve your quality of life. Additionally, North Haven is working with K & K Recycling to begin recycling waste building materials such as sheetrock, metals, concrete, wood, packaging, cardboard and plastic.

We continue to expand our special event programming. Last year's Ladd Field anniversary was a great success, despite challenging weather, we had a great jazz festival in June, we're looking forward to a tremendous Battle of the Bands in July, and we'll have a great Octoberfest in August (it's too cold in October!)

My family and I have enjoyed being a part of the Fort Wainwright community. We will miss the daily interaction with all of you. We won't be going far, though, as we've decided to retire here in Fairbanks.

I want to thank you for all your sacrifices, contributions and continuing commitment to Fort Wainwright. There is no better place to serve than here, and that's due to you. God bless you all.

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.



MEDDAC commander

Col. George Appenzeller, MEDDAC-AK commander

MEDDAC-AK Q & A



QUESTION: What is the new "Culture of Trust" initiative instituted by the Army Medical Department?

ANSWER:

In health care, trust plays a critical and important role. What is a Culture of Trust? It is a shared set of beliefs, behaviors and skills that distinguish Army medicine's commitment to our beneficiaries to provide the highest quality and access to health services. Through the Culture of Trust Initiative, we aim to help create an organization where people are passionate about the organization they work for and the work they do. The trust level should be a seamless and outward extension of Army Medical Department personnel towards our patients, beneficiaries, stakeholders, co-workers and community.

Bassett Army Community Hospital is committed to serving the military Family. We achieve this through strategic performance improvement to optimize health and well-being and to maximize the value of health services provided to Soldiers, retirees, their Family members, and commanders in support of the nation.

Trust is the glue that holds an organization together. Whether you are trying to establish a relationship built on trust with your patients, trust with your employees or trust between co-workers, effective communications built on honesty and transparency must be established.

This will permeate all facets of Army medicine. Trust will be woven into the fabric of current initiatives in the Comprehensive Behavioral Health System of Care; Patient Centered Medical Home; Comprehensive Pain Management Campaign Plan and Medical Management Center. Every initiative aimed at improving patients' health-care experiences, outcomes, the health of our people and readiness of our Soldiers will be founded on a Culture of Trust.

Over the next year, you will be hearing and seeing a lot more about trust. We will review and revise our policies to ensure they promote trust. We will build and reinforce the skills and abilities throughout Army medicine to grow and sustain trust.

Creating a culture of trust in any organization requires commitment to many trust-building actions over time. The intention of Bassett Army Community Hospital and its staff is to instill a high level of trust throughout all elements of our patient centered care.

ALASKA POST

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The ALASKA POST – Home of the Arctic Warriors

ACE suicide prevention program wins national recognition

Jane Gervasoni, U.S. Army Public Health Command Public Affairs

The Army ACE Suicide Intervention Training Program, developed by U.S. Army Public Health Command (Provisional) behavioral health experts, has been evaluated by a panel of suicide prevention experts and is now listed in the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and American Foundation Best Practice Registry for Suicide Prevention.

The best practices registry is an independent organization supported by a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Three suicide prevention experts reviewed the ACE suicide intervention program and

found that it met standards of accuracy, safety, adherence to prevention program guidelines and likelihood of meeting the goals and objectives of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.

ACE was created in response to an Army leadership request to develop a Soldier-specific suicide intervention skills training support package for Armywide distribution, according to James Cartwright, social worker with the USAPHC (Provisional) Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness.

Based on research literature, the program has undergone a process of testing and revision that included focus group interviews and pilot testing to determine training utility

and feasibility. ACE has been reviewed by Army Medical Command personnel and Army G-1, the Army's proponent for suicide training, for applicability and was approved for Armywide training by the Army Task Force on Suicide Prevention, Cartwright said.

ACE is a four-hour training that provides Soldiers with the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to intervene with those at risk for suicide. It includes suicide awareness, warning signs, risk factors

and intervention skills development.

ACE stands for "Ask, Care and Escort." It encourages Soldiers to directly and honestly question any battle buddy who exhibits suicidal behavior. The Soldier should Ask the battle buddy whether he or she is suicidal, Care for the battle buddy and Escort the battle buddy to the source of professional help, Cartwright explained.

"This training helps Soldiers and others who have taken it to be aware of warning signs exhibited by a battle buddy who is hurting and ... intervene before a suicidal crisis," according to Lt. Col. Scott Weichl, USAPHC (Provisional) chaplain.

ACE program materials include a trainer's manual, PowerPoint slides with embedded video messages, suicide prevention tip cards listing risk factors and warning signs for suicide, and ACE wallet cards (with simple directions for identifying and intervening with those at risk).

Cartwright explained that the material is easily taught, and all Soldiers are encouraged to receive the training. He said part of the training is a role-playing exercise that provides participants a chance to practice the intervention skills they learn in the training. The role-playing requires Soldiers to imagine that they are in a suicidal situation, and they have to use their skills to save a life.

"Get involved! Don't let your battle buddy die by suicide," Weichl said as he stressed the importance of the training.

ACE cards and other suicide training materials are available to units through the USAPHC (Provisional) online shopping cart at <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/home/>. Links to AKO-based training also are available on the site.



Ask, Care, Escort, Suicide Intervention (ACE-SI) Peer Training & Certification

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Location:

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To register contact:

David Lemelin, 353-1378 or
david.lemelin1@us.army.mil

A Midsummer Knight's read

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

Lords and ladies of all ages are invited to come forth for the Fort Wainwright library summer reading program.

"It is a DoD-sponsored program and the theme is "A Midsummer Knight's Read," said Joy Wohlman Boyce, program coordinator. "We are doing all sorts of themed events and themed reading to go along with the event."

"We changed it a little bit from what the DoD had," she said. "The original program was for children only. We are making it all ages instead. We are encouraging families to read together, ages zero to whatever. That is one of the best ways to learn how to read; to encourage literacy is to read out loud. Additionally we are including adults in the program, to encourage summer reading."

The reading list is broken into five age-appropriate groups of books which include "Stone Soup," "How to Train Your Dragon," books from the "Harry Potter" series and some written by JRR Tolkien.

The fun of the program is not just limited to the joy of spending time with a good book according to Boyce. "We are encouraging reading with events, lots of fun events."

"July 1 is going to be the king's feast." We are going to be making little goblets and have made-up food like ogre fingers and ogre eyeballs and stuff like that. Also, real medieval food, like honey oat cakes and almond milk." This kickoff event is today from 4 to 5 p.m.

"The next event, on July 8, is jousting and relays; that is going to be a lot of fun," Boyce said.

"On July 15, we are doing medieval games, everything from feeding our pet ogre, (a great big cutout) slime and frogs. There will also be fishing, because fishing was a medieval pastime for children and bocce ball, which was also."

The library will host a Renaissance Fair July 22, which will also be the last event of the summer reading program.

"We are hoping people will wear costumes.



Madison and Patrick Stites help Joy Wohlman Boyce, coordinator of the Midsummer Knight's Reading Program, create 'a dragon to slay' July 22, the final night of the program. Madison and Patrick are the children of Heidi and 1st Sgt. Steve Stites, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. (Photo by Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO)

We are encouraging princes, princesses, knights, dragons, whatever," Boyce said. In addition to arts and crafts, "we are going to have a court tug-of-war, which is a tug-of-war and we are going to have a feast. The 'Paladin du Garrisonne' will give awards to top readers."

As part of "The Library and the Dragon" program, a papier mache dragon is being constructed at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center Monday and Thursday afternoons from 1 to 3 p.m. The dragon will be "slain," at the July 22 event.

"It is the whole medieval, Shakespearian fantasy-type thing. We are incorporating what modern day people think of when they think medieval. Anything from Harry Potter, to my fairy princess, to Shakespeare..." Boyce said.

Registration is required and space is limited. Sign up at the front desk of the library or by calling Boyce at 353-4137. All events will be held on the front lawn of the library, "come rain or shine," so Boyce advised that participants dress for the weather.

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MAGIC: Camp Adventure comes to Fort Wainwright

Continued from page 1

She was familiar with the program because of her work at other military installations and introduced the program to Fort Wainwright because of staffing issues. "I could see the stress on the managers' faces and the stress on the staff itself."

"When the hiring freeze happened we were not able to fill a lot of our positions so (military spouses) were very stretched. We had interns come to help with that. Even if we fill our positions, we still need them in a sense because we still have block leave, redeployment, R & R, and those things go on until all the Soldiers are home," she said.

According to its 2011 press release, the program is currently providing camp programs and services for all branches of the military, serving more than 10,000 children each day in 2010.

There are 20 Camp Adventure interns assigned to Fort Wainwright for the summer program June 9 to August 19. They complete an extensive training program at their home location before being assigned to their post. Each installation then provides additional training specific to that location so they can meet local standards.

Amber Mitchell is entering her senior year at the University of Toledo and hopes to become a school psychologist. This is her third year as a Camp Adventure counselor. She said she signed up for the program because she enjoys working with kids and traveling.

"We create magical moments that last a lifetime," Mitchell said. "For the kids, there are always things that may be going on at home, but once they come into Camp Adventure, we want them to forget that."

"My first summer was a life-changing summer. I helped a lot of kids," she said. "A lot of them came out of their shell, and a lot of them were under a lot of stress and had other issues. It was fun to see them grow throughout the summer."

Tamina Johnson is not a typical Camp Adventure intern. She has a master's degree in chemistry, is returning to school for her doctorate this fall and before she came here she was doing cancer research. She said she "just wanted a change of pace, wanted to learn about kids."

"What we do here at Camp Adventure is really awesome. We come here, take care of

military children; I think it is great we are able to be a support system. I would like to help them in some type of way."

Both women said the program is very selective, looking for a quality person and that they had to undergo a rigorous screening and training process.

Terry Duncan, Youth Center director, is excited to have the Camp Adventure team at Fort Wainwright.

"They are bringing new and updated ideas - new fun ideas that we can incorporate into what we are doing. It is always good to have new people coming in, especially when they are enthusiastic and it just kind of breathes new life into what we are doing and we are always up for that."

"This group leaves mid-August," she said, "but new Camp Adventure staff will be here throughout the year until the deployment is over. We hope that once they are gone the programming ideas will stick with us after they have gone."

"They are here to help us promote programming, help with staffing, to ease the burden on some of our employees, because of the deployment schedule," she said. "Because the majority of the base is deployed, and we have several of our employees who are spouses of deployed Soldiers, so just to ease the burden. So that they would be able to go on block leave and other activities that are for spouses of deployed Soldiers."

The Youth Center plans "an increase in activities to make it exciting and fun" because of the Camp Adventure counselors.

"We are still in the planning stages. We have things based on some of the big summer movie blockbusters: Harry Potter festival, Transformers festival. We are doing field trips all over: Chena River raft trip, rock-wall climbing, laser tag, using a lot of the facilities on base like the swimming pool."

"We are also going to Denali National Park to go white-water rafting. We are going hiking. We are planning to do a lot of different things. We are going to do different activities: art, fitness, social," Duncan said. "We will have tournaments, like pool table tournaments, ping pong tournaments, video game tournaments, everything. A lot of competition, because teenagers like competition. We are trying to gear in to what teenagers like to do."

"I can't wait to see" (what Camp Adventure



Jhaiann Marsden took a break with Camp Adventure intern Christina Muncy at School Age Services June 21. Jhaiann's father is Sgt. 1st Class Gary Marsden, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. Her mother, Lacie Marsden, is with the 168th Air Refueling Wing at Eielson Air Force Base. (Photo by Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO)

counselors will add to planned programs) said Jordan Lewis, School Age Services director. "They are coming in and getting us pumped up," he said. "They are getting the kids pumped up, the staff pumped up."

"They are going to bring in some new ideas. It will give our staff a break," Asuncion said. "Our children and youth can benefit from the different activities the interns bring. I would love to hear the children moving, singing and reciting rhymes. I would love to see our teens having a positive experience. I would hope that everyone will forget for a moment their stressors and simply have a fabulous day."

ARMY STORY: Love at first sight

Continued from page 1

"I consider myself blessed to have my husband here with me," said Heather. "I know we are the exception."

As a military spouse, the hardest thing for me about deployments is saying goodbye. This time, I haven't had to say goodbye!"

The two California natives deployed to Afghanistan in April. After arriving in country, they were assigned to the same forward operating base and were granted joint living space.

"I am deployed with my best friend and we are fortunate enough to see each other ... we are very grateful and couldn't ask for more," said Heather.

She continued, "I know that we probably won't be able to stay together for this whole year, and that's ok ... just knowing that our deployment will end at the same time next year is a blessing."

Aaron said. "It truly is a blessing to have her here with me."

The Fraziers agree that deploying together has been a blessing but say it still has its challenges.

"One of the challenges of being deployed together is that sometimes we work on some of the same projects, but we both have a different way of getting things done," Heather said smiling. "I have to remind myself that just because it is not done my way, doesn't mean it is being done the wrong way. And another hardship is finding the time to nurture our marriage ... focusing on work 24/7 it can be hard to

find the time to give emotionally," she said. "We just take it a day at a time and take advantage of the times we have together."

Although the two are enjoying the joint deployment, their marriage hasn't always been easy.

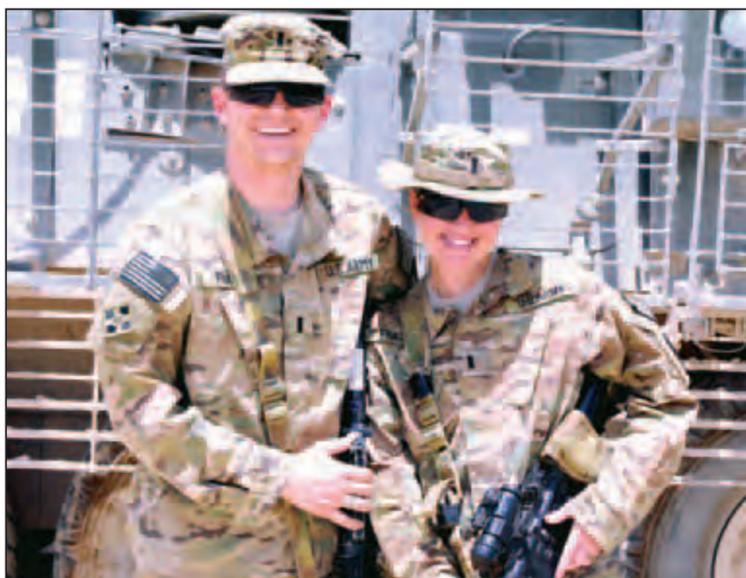
In fact, the two have spent more than five of their 12 years of marriage separated, including their first wedding anniversary, when Aaron was called to serve in Kuwait.

"We have learned, through our years of marriage and being in the Army, that it is important to

the Army, and we both decided from the beginning that if one was going to stay in, that the other would too!"

"We didn't and don't want to go through the Army 'experience' without each other," added Aaron, a San Diego native.

Despite the couple having to spend multiple anniversaries, birthdays and other important holidays separated, the two agree that without the Army they probably would have no 'fairy tale love story.' In fact, they probably would have never met at all.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Aaron Frazier and his wife, 1st Lt. Heather Frazier, both personnel officers assigned to the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, based out of Fort Wainwright, Alaska, take time out of their busy day to relax for a moment at Forward Operating Base Lagman. The married couple is currently deployed together in southern Afghanistan. (Photo by Spc. Thomas Duval/1-25th SCBT PAO)

take advantage and appreciate what you have when you have it and to live in the now," Aaron said.

And while many dual-military couples would have a rough time adjusting to the demanding lifestyle, it's what the Fraziers have grown to know.

"The Army is all our relationship knows," said Heather, a Palmdale, Calif., native. "We have always been in

How they met

It was Oct. 19, 1999, and Heather's birthday had begun like no previous one had. A 5:30 a.m. wake up, followed by hours of rigorous physical fitness. Typically, physical training would put a damper on a birthday, but not for Heather.

Instead, it was a day when she would get the biggest present of her life.

"I met Aaron on the first day

of chaplain assistant advanced individual training at Fort Jackson, S.C.," Heather said. "I liked him from the moment that I saw him, but it was dark, so I knew I needed to wait and see what he looked like in the light."

Much like Heather, it was love at first sight for Aaron.

"When I first saw her, I thought she was cute, but I thought it was better to make a decision later that day," he said. "My initial thought of her was correct. She was even more attractive in the daylight."

In love, the two soldiers began pursuing a relationship, or at least the possibility of one.

"Our first conversation was about God and our faith," Heather said. "From that moment, I knew there was something very special about him and that I felt love for him."

Luckily for Heather, Aaron felt the same way.

"After a short while I felt myself thinking that she could be 'The One' for me," he said.

Aaron wasn't the only one who saw the connection.

"One day after training, I was speaking with one of our classmates about Heather, and he said, 'What you have to decide is do you try and marry her now or later,'" remembered Aaron. "This statement was kind of random and caused my heart to skip because I knew that she was meant to be my wife."

He was right, and over the past 12 years the spark that began in the early morning hours on Heather's 18th birthday has ignited into a love that has endured unimaginable obstacles. But despite the many challenges, the Fraziers are doing what they like to call 'living in the now,' which happens to be in a country much different than anyone will find in a romantic movie.

"We are both super proud to be serving our nation and are completely dedicated to our service. We were born to live the life we do ... and we love every minute of it," Heather said.

STUDENT: Receives Fort Wainwright scholarship

Continued from page 1

This scholarship is funded through outside contributions from DeCA's industry partners. Fisher House Foundation serves as the program administrator. Fisher House Foundation operates a network of comfort houses located near military medical centers, providing a "home away from home" for the families of hospital patients in crisis. This past year a comfort house was built near Dover for Families of the Fallen so that they would have a peaceful place to stay while waiting for the return of their fallen loved ones.

In 2011, 670 scholarships were awarded in the amount of \$1,005,000 since the program's inception in 2000 over \$8.3 million scholarships have been awarded to 5,402 military dependants from more than 57,000 applicants.

"The gratification of presenting this scholarship is beyond words, knowing that you have touched someone and given them the opportunity to reach their destiny," McDonald said.

Marcinkowski graduated seventh in her class with a grade-point-average of 3.94, while completing 24.5 credits including advanced placement classes.

In addition to the scholarship awards on post, Marcinkowski is a University Alaska Scholar, meaning she was in the top 10 percent of her class at the end of her junior year. She will attend the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the fall.

"I am honored that the board has picked me above everyone else that submitted applications," Marcinkowski said. Mom, Janis Marcinkowski, works for the

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital Laboratory blood bank and dad, "Robert, "Ski" Marcinkowski, is a G-3 operations specialist on Fort Wainwright. "Sophie is an intelligent, confident and caring person, always quick to volunteer to help people and organizations. When she commits to something she commits completely and sees it all the way through to completion - she is a finisher-a closer," her father said.

The young Marcinkowski was a member of the National Honor Society and senior editor of the yearbook. She was co-captain of the Lathrop High School rifle team and shot on the varsity team for two years. She volunteered at the Fairbanks Community Food Bank and Santa's Clearing House as well as other non-profit organizations. She also volunteered at the Youth Center on post and was a youth delegate at the Army Family Action Plan Conference at Fort Wainwright her Sophomore year and part of the Youth AFAP Forum her Junior year. "Right now I'm not sure what I want to major in," she said, "I am just getting rid of those basic classes, but I am interested in graphic design, photography and journalism."

Her parents knew at an early age Sophie was going to accomplish great things in her life, "when she got her first moose at 10 years old," her dad said. "She gets a little embarrassed when I dote on her, especially on Facebook where friends and family can all see it."

The daughter is very grateful for her parents and the support they have given her all her life. She said whenever I wanted to try something new, they always said, "We will work this into our busy



Lori McDonald, store director, Fort Wainwright Commissary, (left) presents Sophie Marcinkowski with a plaque from the Scholarship for Military Children Program June 22 at the commissary on post. Standing up with their daughter is Robert "Ski" Marcinkowski, operation specialist, U.S. Army Alaska G-3 and wife, Janis. (Photo by Allen Shaw/Fort Wainwright PAO)

schedules, but make sure you have fun."

Marcinkowski was presented a plaque by McDonald during a cake

and punch celebration. A poster with her photo will be on display at the commissary for a year.

NORTHERN EDGE: Army and Air Force on 'Moly' Ridge



Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) and Airmen from 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron in a 'react to indirect fire' scenario on Molybdenum Ridge in Alaska's Donnelly Training Area. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Reese Von Rogatz/16th CAB PAO)

Continued from page 1

The 3rd ASOS members out of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, coordinate, request and control close air support, theater airlift, and reconnaissance.

Joining them are JFOs from the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne).

Directing the action of combat aircraft engaged in CAS and other offensive operations is critical to successfully prosecuting the air and land battle. According to Field, the JFOs are forward observers controlling surface fires, while JTACs integrate air into the ground scheme of maneuver.

"The training mission was designed to introduce our younger guys, new to the squadron, to terrain and situations like those in Afghanistan," said Field. "The first scenario, oriented toward the observers, involved taking mortar fire and performing an immediate suppression mission."

The task is completed, evaluated. The team moves. Ascending a steep mossy grade strewn with rock is a struggle, the weight

of a rucksack an anchor dragging one backward.

According to Field, there's a McDonald's somewhere up ahead. We laugh, the mood is lighter. Thoughts of rolling downhill in a tangle of limbs and coming to a stop far below are brushed aside.

Climbing 300 meters to a new position, Field changes scenario parameters. Soldiers and Airmen execute. Onward, to occupy an objective rally point and simulate a 'troops in contact' mission with close proximity to friendly forces. Perform land navigation, practice terrain association using maps of different scale.

Afterwards, we descend to the original starting point and further still to a landing zone for extraction. Finding solid footing expends strength and energy with each step. The pace is steady, with safety in mind.

"These JFOs are the guys we'll be deploying with, so it's a good rapport-builder," said Field. "When you suffer together, you get a little tighter."

Preparation began a week earlier with an air mission coordination

meeting. The needs of JFO/JTAC personnel were communicated to the operations shop of 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, 16th Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and assigned to a group of pilots.

The planning process, details are sorted.

To simulate a combat scenario, is there a notional threat from enemy systems? Divert around enemy activity or take evasive action? Have alternate landing zones been determined that meet the needs of the unit? How many passengers? How will they exit the aircraft, one door or both?

"Any chance that we get to work with a ground unit in a tactical scenario is always beneficial to us," said Capt. Logan P. Collins, Alpha Company commander, 1-52nd, 16th CAB.

"Whenever you get to work with an outside agency that has a different perspective on aviation than your own, (it's) always a good thing," he explained. "This especially helps the younger aviators who haven't deployed yet. They get to see a different aspect of operations than they normally would."

A Black Hawk pilot, Collins enjoys the face-to-face interaction with troops on the ground, getting a more intimate feel for their mission, carrying them to their destination. "It is more satisfying than flying above them," he said.

"While the CH-47 Chinook does see a lot of service, especially in Afghanistan due to its ability to get to higher altitudes," he continued, "the UH-60 Black Hawk is the go-to assault platform for most units because of its versatility."

While it can't carry as much as a Chinook, the Black Hawk helicopter is

very survivable, easier to maintain and cheaper to produce, Collins said.

"Our standard for a landing is plus or minus 50 meters on a given grid location, within 30 seconds of a specified time," said Chief Warrant Officer Jason Driskill, UH-60 helicopter pilot and Alpha Company aviation safety officer, 1-52nd Aviation, 16th CAB.

"To be a pilot in our company, that is a requirement, period," he added.

Driskill, a Black Hawk pilot since 2003, has deployed twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan.

"This is the first time I've flown anywhere

with skis on," he said. "Alaska as a whole is an excellent opportunity that most pilots, aviators and crew chiefs should experience just because the environment is so challenging."

The Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, a vast territory with its expansive co-located air and land ranges and associated support infrastructure makes that training possible.

"This was a unique opportunity to get everyone together -- Army and Air Force, rotary and fixed wing aircraft," said Field. "It worked out really well for us."



Air Force Master Sgt. Sean Field, 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron gives instructions to the team prior to executing the next scenario of the training mission in Alaska's Donnelly Training Area. (Photo by Spc. Reese Von Rogatz/16th CAB PAO)

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

find it here!

Friday - 1st

MIDSUMMER KNIGHT'S READ KICK-OFF PARTY, 4 to 5:30 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-2642.

RED GRAMMER CHILDREN'S SHOW, 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, Building 3702. Call 353-6043.

COLLEGE GLACIER OVERNIGHT, all day Friday and Saturday. Participants depart from the Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Open to cardholders ages 16 and older. Cost is \$35. Call 361-2652.

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

Saturday - 2nd

COMMUNITY GAME DAY, 1 to 6 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

ZUMBA FITNESS, 1 to 2 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Cost is \$7 per class. Call 353-7223.

BLUEBERRY SMUSH STORY and CRAFT HOUR, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

CUSTOM PICTURE-FRAMING CLASS, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Arts and Crafts Center, Building 3727. Cost is \$35 and includes materials. Participants need to bring a 5-by-7 picture to frame. Open to cardholders ages 16 and older. Call 353-7520.

Sunday - 3rd

TABLE MOUNTAIN HIKE, all day, Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Open to participants ages 7 and older (under 18 must be accompanied by an adult) and will depart from ORC at 8 a.m. Cost is \$5. Call 361-2652.

PLEIN AIR PAINTING/DRAWING WORKSHOP, 2 to 5 p.m., Arts and Crafts Center, Building 3727. Cost is \$65 and includes all materials for 4 weeks sessions. Open to participants ages 16 and older. Call 353-7520.

ATV SAFETY COURSE, 1 to 5 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Open to participants ages 18 and older. This course is required for any of the ATV programs ORC will host during the summer. Call 361-4089.

Monday - 4th

ARCTIC CIRCLE TOUR, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Participants will depart from the ORC. Cost is \$25 for adults and \$15 (youth 12 and under). Call 361-2652.

RED, WHITE & BLUE GOLF TOURNAMENT, 8 a.m. to noon, Chena Bend Golf Course, Building 2092. Call 353-6223.

Tuesday - 5th

STRESS MANAGEMENT, 3 to 4:30 p.m., Northern Light Inn Conference Room, Building 3402. Call 353-4248.

GROUP CYCLING, 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. or 5 to 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

ACT OUT STORY TIME THEATRE, 2 to 3 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Call 353-4137.

CHENA RIVER KING QUEST, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Participants need to have a fishing license with King Salmon Stamp, tackle, rod and reel. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth (7 to 15 years old). Call 361-6349.

9th Army Band around town

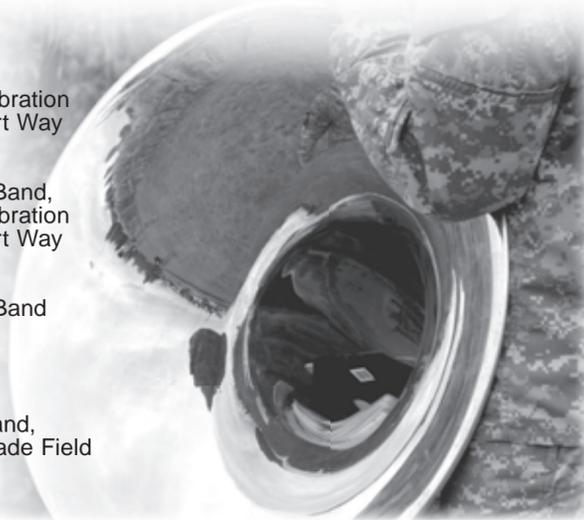
July 1 at Noon,
Concerts in the Plaza
Golden Heart Plaza

July 4 at 11 a.m. and noon
4th of July Community Celebration
Pioneer Park at 2300 Airport Way

July 4 at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Jammin' Salmon Dixieland Band,
4th of July Community Celebration
Pioneer Park at 2300 Airport Way

July 6 at 7 p.m.
Jammin' Salmon Dixieland Band
Concerts in the Plaza
Golden Heart Plaza

July 8 at 10 a.m.
Garrison Change of Command,
Fort Wainwright's Kadd Parade Field



Wednesday - 6th

CARDIO SCULPT: STRENGTH and CARDIO, 5 to 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

HOOR OF POWER: GROUP STRENGTH, noon to 1 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

ANGER MANAGEMENT, 3 to 4:30 p.m., Behavioral Health Conference Room, Building 4066. Call 353-4248.

CHENA RIVER KING QUEST, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Participants need to have a fishing license with King Salmon Stamp, tackle, rod and reel. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth (7 to 15 years old). Call 361-6349.

PERSONAL FINANCIAL READINESS, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Bring current end-of-month LES. This class is mandatory for First Term Soldiers who have not previously attended. All ranks and Family members are welcome. Call 353-7438.

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS, 11 a.m. to noon, Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

OUR HEROES' TREE AND OUR FAMILY TREE, 3 to 6 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

Thursday - 7th

LEVY BRIEFING, 9 to 11 a.m., Military Personnel Division Basemant Classroom, Building 3401. Call 353-4333.

CHENA RIVER KING QUEST, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Participants need to have a fishing license with King Salmon Stamp, tackle, rod and reel. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth (7 to 15 years old). Call 361-6349.

GROUP CYCLING, 6:30 to 7:30 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP, 9:30 to 11 a.m., Youth Center, Building 4109. Transportation for Families to and from Romp and Stomp is available at the Northern Lights Inn at 9 a.m. Call 361-7713/7372.

ZUMBA FITNESS, 6 to 7 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Cost is \$7 per class. Call 353-7223.

SCREAM-FREE PARENTING, noon to 1 p.m., Northern Lights Inn Conference Room, Building 3402. Call 353-6286.

WII MARIO KART, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Call 353-7755.

LEGAL NOTICE

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Sgt. Jeffrey Chul Soon Sherer of B Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, may contact Capt. Richard Fowle, 1-24th Rear Detachment at 353-2211. Send correspondence to: Capt. Richard T. Fowle, 3214 E. Santiago Ave, Fort Wainwright, AK 99703.

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Pvt. Ryan J. Larson of B Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, may contact 1st Lt. James Desjarlais, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1-25th SBCT, 3717 Neely Road, Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-8700 or call 353-1630.

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Noon	4th of July Ceremony	GAZEBO PERFORMANCES	
1:00-3:00	U.S. Army Alaska Arctic Warrior Band	3:00-5:00	Clarence Pate and Friends
3:00-5:00	Fairbanks Community Band	5:00-7:00	Jesse Quandt and the Black Diamond Band
PLAYGROUND		7:00-8:00	Aurelia String Quartet (Gazebo Nights presentation)
1:30-2:15	Kids' Games	NATIVE VILLAGE	
1:30-4:30	Face Painting	2:00-6:00	Gospel Music with Sister Barbie
1:45-2:45	Cold Steel	STAMPEDE STAGE	
2:45-4:30	Kids' Games	3:00-5:00	Tim Robb
3:00-3:30	Red Hackle Pipe Band		
3:30-4:30	Pantheon Steel Drum Band		

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FAIRBANKS

For your information

Renovated bowling center opens with a new look

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO



The newly renovated Nugget Lanes Bowling Center opens today at 1 p.m. (Photo by Allen Shaw/Fort Wainwright PAO)

"Rolling Thunder" will hit Fort Wainwright today as pins crash and crackle at the grand re-opening of the Nugget Lanes Bowling Center. There is an open house starting at 1 p.m. with a ribbon-cutting, followed by cake-mingling, face-painting, door prizes and free bowling.

Grammy-nominated artist Red Grammer will perform under the tent from 5:30 to 7 p.m., followed by an evening of entertainment in the Gold Rush Lounge.

"We are very much about family-fun entertainment," said Steve Coulson, bowling center manager, Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. "It's also a place where the single Soldier can just come and hang out," he said.

The bowling center has been closed a little over a year and is coming out of a \$2.5 million dollar renovation. "There is no longer a sunken pit surrounded by molded plastic," Coulson said. The concourse and approach to the lanes are on the same level and the facility "has a café and boutique feel."

Along with the open-flowing design and comfortable seating, a state-of-the-art Vector-Plus scoring system has been installed. "It is only one of three such systems in Alaska and certainly the only one in Fairbanks," Coulson said. "There is new paint on the walls, new carpet, new furniture; everywhere you look, you see fresh."

Included in the renovation is the Gold Rush Lounge, which grew from 800 square feet to nearly 2,500 square feet. It has a free pool table, free cable television and

free Wi-Fi. The bar will serve wine, micro-brewed craft beers and top-shelf liquor. "We will rotate through specialty martinis each week," Coulson said. There will occasionally be live music, open-mike and karaoke. "We will also host Operation Rising Star, the Army's version of American Idol."

Two multi-purpose rooms will also be added to accommodate birthday parties or business meetings.

The bowling center will also have league play, open-bowling, a variety of tournaments, cosmic bowl, thunder alley, party-packages for units and youth outings and a youth camp next summer.

The facility is open to Soldiers, Family members, retirees and civilians. The bowling lanes are open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday. The lounge is open 5 to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday and 5 to 9 p.m. Sunday.

"This shows what can be done with Soldiers' dollars," Coulson said. "This was a true non-appropriated fund project, which means every dollar put into the renovation came from the folks who spend their money here. This is the face of FMWR on Fort Wainwright."

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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

June 6

A son, Ryan Holt, was born to Misty and Spc. Travis Holt, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st, Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

NORTH POLE SUMMER FESTIVAL

The City of North Pole will host a summer festival Monday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to celebrate Independence Day. The theme this year is "Sleigh Bells Ring for Freedom" and the activities will begin with a pancake breakfast and then a 5K Elf Run fun run.

Following the run there will be a parade through town, leading to a midway of food, games and entertainment at the new Christmas Creek Market, formerly Santaland RV Park.

Trophies will be awarded for Mayor's Choice, Best Theme, Most Patriotic and Best Group in the parade. There will also be cash prizes for the greased pig wrestling contest and the Last Great Bed Race competition.

For more information call Mayor Doug Isaacson, 488-8584 or visit www.northpolealaska.com.

PIONEER PARK INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department at Pioneer Park will host an Independence Day celebration Monday beginning at 11 a.m. at Pioneer Park.

There will be a 50-state salute by Soldiers and Airmen, performances by the U.S. Army Alaska "Arctic Warrior" Band and a variety of entertainment, a kid's parade, games and activities throughout the day. There is no admission fee and everyone is welcome to attend. For more information call 459-1087 or for a schedule of events, visit www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/pioneerpark.

PROTESTANT WOMEN

July's Protestant Women of the Chapel "First Friday" is a red, white and blue event this evening, 6:30 p.m. at the Northern Lights Chapel - free event with food and activities for spouses, plus free childcare and games and activities for school-age children.

Call Joanna Hart at 356-9205 for more information.

FEEDING OUR OUTSTANDING DEPENDENTS

Members of the Fort Wainwright Southern Lights Chapel invite Family members of currently and soon-to-be deployed Soldiers to an evening where we cook for you. Sunday is "Breakfast for Supper" at the Southern Lights Chapel, Bldg. 4107, 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

CALLING ALL COOKS

Do you have a favorite recipe that you would like to see served at the dining facility for lunch?

Send us a copy of your recipe and once a month we will draw a recipe and prepare it. Please send it to: elaine.swenor@us.army.mil Include your name and phone number so we can notify you when your recipe will be served.

7TH ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Armed Services YMCA is hosting the 7th Annual Charity Golf Tournament July 29 at the Chena Bend Golf Course starting at 8 a.m. It will be a shotgun start and prizes will be given for holes-in-one, men's and women's longest drive and team prizes for 1st through 3rd. Entry fee is \$500 per 4 person team and all proceeds help fund ASYMCA programs in assisting local military personnel and Families.

For more information, call 353-5962.

ARCTIC HEALTH LINK

The Arctic Health Link office is located in the medical library at Bassett Army Community Hospital is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The office is closed for lunch from noon to 1 p.m. For more information, call 361-4148.

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GI Jane, Alaska Post Contributor

GI Jane runs the deployment race, spurs spouses to finish line

So, have you settled in to this deployment yet? Are you doing everything you want to do? Being all you can be? We're long past the early stages of this journey but I'm still thinking about deployment goals. We focused on deployment goals in the last column, but I'm wondering if there are some of us who might still be trying to find our way with this. It's not too late to set the tone for our deployment experience. It's really not too late.

There is no denying that these are challenging times. The old adage, "tough times don't last but tough people do," has never seemed more true to me than in the middle of a deployment. I've been through several and while I would never say that I would choose to go through this or have my husband go through this, I'm learning that some of my biggest accomplishments have come in the midst of a deployment.

I bought a house by myself during a deployment a few years back. Knowing that I can handle something like that gives me such confidence.

I also ran in the Army Ten Miler during a previous deployment. Running 10 miles might be something I never do again, but knowing that I did it - that I can do it - spurs me on to try new things now. Plus, my husband was so proud of me. Knowing that I was doing better than okay and that I was pushing myself to try new things was such an encouragement to him. I believe that I helped him worry less about me and the kids and focus where he needed to - on the mission.

I'm working on that again this time. From kayaking on the Chena River to losing a few pounds, staying fit, working on craft projects and doing my best to help other military families, I'm determined to have fond memories from this deployment time. Taking care of myself is not just for me; it's for

my husband, my kids, my neighbors and my fellow GI Janes.

It's about community. Whether your military community consists of unit friends, neighbors, fellow family readiness group members or friends from church, you have an amazing resource and gift. Our military community can do something that even our extended families can't do. Your military community is here, going through this with you. Don't underestimate the huge effect this can have on your deployment experiences. Maybe you've tried attending an FRG meeting or function, MWR, chapel or other event in the past and had a bad experience. I understand, but I encourage you to try again. Reaching out and connecting with others going through this too might be exactly what you need to get or stay on track.

So, whether your deployment phase is off to a roaring start and you're achieving everything you hoped or you haven't found your momentum yet, that's okay. It's not too late. Start today. Go for a walk. Attend that event. Take that spin class. Tackle that community 5k. Go to that play date. Sign up for that arts and crafts class. Make that healthy choice at the Commissary. Pay off some debt. Call that friend who has been on your mind. Write your Soldier a letter. Smile. Take that first step and I guarantee you the next steps will get easier. Believe me, I know. And, it won't just be your Soldier who is proud of you; you will be proud of yourself and that is the most important approval you can ever earn. Don't delay - start right now. You can do it!

Editor's Note: The Alaska Post features the GI Jane column every other week. GI Jane is a composite character of many different military spouse contributors and offers a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives. We would like to hear from readers. Submit column ideas and feedback to pao.fwa@us.army.mil.

Partnership links military spouses with employers

Terri Moon Cronk, American Forces Press Service

The Defense Department is launching a new partnership that's intended to expand job opportunities for military spouses by connecting them with employers actively seeking to hire them.

Microsoft, Home Depot, Starbucks and the Navy Federal Credit Union are just a few of the nearly 60 corporations and companies that have signed on with the DoD partnership, said Robert L. Gordon III, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy.

The partnership launched June 29 and Gordon expects 14 more companies will be added to the partnership's roster.

"The design of this program is to bring together those spouses who want to work with a web portal where companies that would like to employ our military spouses can find them," he said.

That web portal is Military OneSource located at www.militaryonesource.com, which also offers job-seeking resources such as resume building. People can call OneSource consultants at (800) 342-9647.

The partnership is based on memoranda of agreement to hire military spouses, Gordon explained. Some 100 job fairs are scheduled, starting in Los Angeles July 10, 2011, with 200 companies ready to offer jobs to spouses.

"Military spouses bring a lot to the table," he said. "They've volunteered and lead different activities on and off our installations. They are skilled, diverse,

and know how to operate in a team environment."

Their sense of team focus and strong work ethic are some of the attributes and characteristics employers are looking for in a 21st century work force, he added.

Military spouses have been hit hard by the job market, Gordon acknowledged, and face an unemployment rate of 28 percent.

Of the military's 1.2 million spouses, he said, 80 percent want to work, but have been held back by multiple moves and deployments. Additionally, a 25 percent wage gap divides military spouses and their civilian counterparts, he added.

Because of those factors, the partnership pinpointed organizations that could offer telework options and portable jobs, he said.

In the course of setting up the program's framework, Gordon has asked spouses what they would like to see in such a partnership.

"One of them said, 'Don't over-engineer things. We want to look for jobs. We want to be empowered,'" he said. "And that's what we've done. We've devised a program that will bring spouses together with employers who are looking for their skills."

The partnership is aligned with the White House's government-wide approach to military family support that involves an inter-agency effort to strengthen families and enhance their well-being and quality of life.

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