

ALASKA POST

Home of the Arctic Warriors

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STAFF SGT. BRIAN BEEM



A Soldier re-enlistment. **More on page 8**

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday
Clear with patchy ice fog
Low -35 High -15
Light winds

Saturday
Clear
Low -25 High -10
East winds 15 mph becoming North in the afternoon

Sunday
Clear
Low -25 High -20

Forecast courtesy of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

2 Stryker Soldiers die, 8 wounded in separate incidents

Staff Report, U.S. Army Alaska PAO



Sgt. 1st Class Johnathan B. McCain

Sergeant First Class Johnathan B. McCain, died Nov. 13, in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained when insurgents attacked his unit using an improvised explosive device while on a mounted patrol.

Six other Soldiers from the brigade were wounded in the same incident.

McCain, 38, of Apache Junction, Ariz., was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division at Fort Wainwright where he served as an infantry platoon sergeant.

Sgt. 1st Class McCain joined the Army in April 1992 and served at Kaiserslautern, Germany; Fort Hood, Texas; and Fort Bragg, N.C. before arriving in Alaska in October 2000. McCain also served two previous combat tours of duty in Iraq from August 2005 to November 2006; and from September 2008 to September 2009 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In a separate incident, Spc. Calvin



Spc. Calvin Matthew Pereda

Matthew Pereda, died Nov. 12, in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained when insurgents attacked his unit using an improvised explosive device while on a dismounted patrol.

Two other Soldiers were wounded in the same incident. All three Soldiers were assigned to the 1-25th SBCT.

Pereda, 21, of Fayetteville, N.C., (shown as a Pfc. Pereda in the courtesy photo), was assigned to the 1-5th where he served as an infantryman.

Pereda joined the Army in March 2010 and graduated from Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Benning, Ga. He arrived in Alaska in August 2010.

The Arctic Wolves, as the 1-25th is known, is a 4,000-Soldier brigade deployed to Afghanistan for a one-year tour in support of Operation Enduring Freedom that began Mid-April 2011.

The next of kin have been notified.

Delegates address Fort Wainwright issues during 3-day AFAP work session

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

Changes in Family Readiness Support Assistance roles and responsibilities, family care plans for married Soldiers and a variety of transportation issues concerning the Fort Wainwright community were a few of the topics discussed by the working groups during the Army Family Action Plan conference at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center this week.



Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Allen, Fort Wainwright garrison chaplain answers questions for one of the workgroups during the Army Family Action Plan conference Wednesday at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center. The local delegates of Soldiers, Family members and DoD civilians addressed several topics involving quality-of-life issues at the local level and concluded with an out-brief on the issues to command leadership. (Photo by Allen Shaw/Fort Wainwright PAO)

See AFAP on page 4

Combat Outpost Lion: Task Force Arctic Wolves

Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler,
1-25th SBCT PAO

Editor's note: This is the last story in a three part series on the actions of Task Force Arctic Wolves from the Home of Panjwa'i.

The newly-established Combat Outpost Lion, in Do'ab Village, needed work. With only some tents surrounded by dirt-filled Hesco barriers, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment set out to make the COP more secure and more comfortable.

"My guys teamed up with engineers. We provided the design, the engineers built it and my guys worked on the infrastructure inside of it," explained 1st Sgt. Jeff Peppin, Company A's first sergeant and a Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, native.

On the company's building to-do list: a Role 1 medical clinic, guard towers for oversight of the village, living accommodations, toilets, showers and shade. They wasted no time.

Peppin said the soldiers were eager to get to work. It was not only a chance for them to do their part in building their new digs, but also a chance for them to showcase their carpentry skills.

The Role 1 medical clinic



Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, return to Combat Outpost Lion after hours-long patrol around the village of Do'ab, Oct. 18. Company A has had a constant presence in the area, extending a road throughout the village and building the COP in an effort to rid the village of Taliban activity. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler/1-25th SBCT PAO)

was set up immediately and is able to administer aid to Soldiers and local Afghans. COP Lion's medics have treated a few local nationals since construction of Lion began.

"With the locals, you see amputations and gunshot wounds. When they come to us, they actually respond well to our treatment and are

very appreciative of us," said Pfc. Sky Nosaka, of Trinidad, Colo. Nosaka is a medic with 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment.

Within in the first month of starting the construction, engineers from the 368th Engineer Battalion, Naval Construction Regiment and infantrymen from 1-5th had assembled tents for housing,

a bathroom and shower facility with hot water.

With the necessities built and in working order, it was up to the platoons in the 1-5th to make improvements. It would take time though. There was still another mission to accomplish: securing Do'ab.

See HOME on page 5

Not gone, not forgotten: Families of departed military members

Jennifer Morales, Alaska Post Contributor

November is Military Family Appreciation Month and the military is continuing its focus on building strong, resilient Families. Along with the dedication and sacrifice of service members, Military Families pay a cost and are sometimes called upon to accept the sacrifice of their loved ones.

When her Soldier was killed in Iraq, March 31, 2004, Leslie Hufstedler-Alvarez was devastated. Many things have changed in the ensuing years for Hufstedler-Alvarez and the military programs intent on supporting Families. These days Hufstedler-Alvarez works as the volunteer program coordinator for the Survivor Outreach Services program at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and uses her testimony to greatly empower other survivors.

The SOS program and military leaders want surviving Family members to know they are not alone.

Before December 2009, there was support for surviving spouses and Family members through the Army's Long Term Family Case Management program, and various nonprofit organizations such as Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Gold Star Wives, and Blue Star mothers. The nonprofit, nongovernment organizations were a great source of support but still couldn't confront some of the harder military organization issues that surviving spouses and Family members had to deal with.

The SOS program advocates for the survivors, making sure all their needs are met, offers a safe place for survivors to voice their concerns and share their grief.

The SOS program offers help to those who are left with their world turned upside down, with counseling, support groups, crisis intervention, referrals and financial counseling provided by our accredited financial counselor, Stacey Gilbert, said Valerie O'Hare, SOS program coordinator at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

The SOS program shows the survivors the Army is here for them as long as they desire, O'Hare said, and the Army does recognize the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made for our country.

The SOS may be known for classes and formal meetings, O'Hare said the program also offers a variety of assistance and support such as peer gatherings for various groups - wives, mothers and men's groups, for example - who have been affected by the loss of a loved one.

A family appreciation weekend marked the tenth anniversary of 9/11 with JBER SOS program participants, active duty personnel, Families, civilians and others who wanted to honor the survivors. The SOS staff and volunteers hosted activities and ceremonies which honored those who have fallen since the War on Terror began and who are dearly missed by their survivors.

It was an opportunity for survivors to gather and gain strength from one another while honoring the lives of their fallen heroes, O'Hare said.

The JBER SOS program offers events and meetings such as the Thanksgiving potluck, a support group for mothers and sisters of fallen Soldiers and a Christmas gathering for all survivors, scheduled for December 22.

The Army has not forgotten these Families, and will not forget the sacrifice their loved ones made.

Even when Families or individuals move away, there is SOS support in each state and someone is always available to help regardless of geographical location.

"As the SOS financial counselor and a prior active duty finance Soldier working with the military for the last 15 years, I am here to ensure our Families are provided with up-to-date information and awareness of laws that may change and affect them," said Gilbert.

In addition to her expertise, Gilbert uses a network of experts from the benefits coordinator to attorneys and will reach out to community resources too to provide comprehensive guidance and support to her clients. "This is our survivors' one-stop service," Gilbert said. "I know that no matter what I do it can never be enough," Gilbert wrote in an email to the Alaska Post, "I will to the best of my ability deliver services based on the specific survivor's needs as long as they need or want."

The SOS program does not limit who can participate. Likewise, there are no exclusions or limits in the definition of a survivor. For the SOS program, a survivor is anyone—immediate Family, extended Family, a friend, a fellow warrior—who feels the loss of a Soldier, said Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, former commander of U.S. Army Installation Management Command and assistant chief of staff for Installation Management.

Whatever is needed, the SOS program exists to help military Families. "Our Survivors have earned our utmost support. The SOS program may not have all of the answers at any given time for every survivor but we will exhaust all efforts to obtain it," said Valerie O'Hare.

For more information on the SOS programs in Alaska you can use the contact information listed below, or find Survivor Outreach Services on Facebook. To call from out of area, use the Alaska area code, 907.

Fort Wainwright
Michelle Benjamin,
SOS Program Coordinator
Building 3401 Santiago Avenue
Fort Wainwright Alaska 99703
Phone: 353-4004
www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Wainwright-Survivor-Outreach-Services

Alaska Guard
Rick Cavens,
SOS Support Coordinator
Camp Denali D103
PO Box 5800
JBER AK 99505
428-6066 office
632-2926 cell
Richard.cavens@us.army.mil

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
Valerie O'Hare,
SOS Program Coordinator
Building 600 A-120
Fort Richardson AK
Phone: 384-0272
www.facebook.com/pages/Joint-Base-Elmendorf-Richardson-Survivor-Outreach-Services

Lea Anne McWhorter,
SOS Support Coordinator
Camp Denali D103
PO Box 5800
JBER, AK 99508
428-6259 office
529-1538 cell
Lea.a.mcwhorter.ctr@us.army.mil

JBER SOS Finance Counselor
Stacey Gilbert,
Accredited Financial Counselor
Building 600 A-116
Fort Richardson AK
Facebook: Joint Base Elmendorf
Richardson Survivor Outreach
Services

Helpful links and article resources:
www.myarmyonesource.com/
www.imcom.army.mil/
www.americanwidowproject.org/

Medical Department Activity - Alaska

Col. George Appenzeller, MEDDAC-AK commander

Encouraging feedback is the road to improving service



When I first arrived here at MEDDAC-AK, I asked you, our customers, to let us know what you think and to give us ideas how to make things better. Whether they are big issues or small suggestions we know they can make a big difference for you as beneficiaries; your feedback is important to us.

We have several different methods in place to assist you in giving us feedback in a way that is convenient for you.

First is the 'Ask the Commander' section of our MEDDAC-AK website. It has come to my attention this week that the link was broken, but it is now again operational and being monitored daily. If you have a question about hospital procedures, services we offer, or a suggestion, this is a great avenue to contact us.

To help keep you in touch with what is happening in our facilities and to hear your feedback, you can now find us on Facebook. By following us on Facebook you will learn about MEDDAC-AK events, changes to operations and get healthy living tips. We want this to be a positive forum for you to ask questions, give suggestions or pass along kudos to our staff.

If you have a specific item that needs to be addressed, you want to give us rapid feedback on our services or to identify items that should be continued or encourage, the Interactive Customer Evaluation is a great system. ICE allows us to identify issues and to quickly find resolutions as well as to identify programs that are going well and staff members who have done something special.

An additional method for us to receive your comments is our Compassionate, Attentive, Responsive, Enthusiastic Service forms located throughout our facilities. CARES is the MEDDAC-AK staff recognition program and gives you the opportunity to let us know if a staff member has gone above and beyond to make your experience a great one. If you have been the beneficiary of or been the witness to excellent customer service, please take the time to fill out a CARES nomination form so we can properly recognize these staff members.

An extremely important option for giving us feedback is the Army Provider Performance Level Satisfaction survey, or APLSS. These are the forms you get in the mail after receiving services. APLSS looks at a large number of patients seen by specific providers and in specific departments. It is very good at showing us trends in specific areas such as courtesy, phone, lab and radiology service and overall satisfaction. We use them to identify areas for improvement and to recognize staff and clinics that provide outstanding care. Additionally, the Office of the Surgeon General tracks our performance on the APLSS surveys and MEDDAC-AK receives additional funding if we perform well. That is money that can be put back into the hospital to better serve you.

Please be aware that APLSS is anonymous so we are not able to contact you if there is a problem, so if you need to speak with us please call or use the ICE or the Ask the Commander options.

Sometimes, we are just too close to the situation to see the simple things. Above are just a few examples of how patients and families can help us become better, safer and more patient-centered. The bottom line is that while we will not be able to support every suggestion, we will look into and take each and every one of the suggestions seriously.

MEDDAC-AK is dedicated to providing outstanding care with great service, and your input is critical to making that happen.

Prevent Colds with this Natural Mineral

Shari Lopatin, TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Feel yourself developing the sniffles? Better take some zinc. Zinc is an element in the earth's crust—one of the most common, in fact. And while too much zinc is dangerous, the human body needs zinc for certain functions. One of the most important is to keep your immune system strong, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. By boosting your intake of zinc, you could help ward off colds. Just make sure you're getting your recommended intake of zinc. Remember, too much could prove harmful to your body.

According to the National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements the following is the Recommended Dietary Allowances for Zinc.

Age	Male	Female
0 to 6 months	2 mg.	2 mg.
7 months to 3 years	3 mg.	3 mg.
4 to 8 years	5 mg.	5 mg.
9 to 13 years	8 mg.	8 mg.
14 to 18 years	11 mg.	9 mg.
19+ years	11 mg.	8 mg.

Foods listed from the National Institutes of Health, which are naturally high in zinc: Oysters or crab, baked beans, canned, raisin bran cereal, cashews, low fat yogurt and fruit, chicken leg, red meats, such as beef or pork. For more information on healthy eating, visit TriWest.com/eathealthy.

ALASKA POST

Home of the Arctic Warriors

EDITORIAL STAFF

Fort Wainwright Garrison Commander

Col. Ronald M. Johnson

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Wainwright PAO

Linda Douglass

Command Information Chief

Connie Storch

Editor

Brian Schlumbohm

Staff writers

Trish Muntean

Allen Shaw

Contributors

Sgt. Thomas Duval, 1-25th SBCT PAO Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler,

1-25th SBCT PAO

Jennifer Morales, Alaska Post Contributor

Staff Sgt. Matthew E. Winstead, U.S. Army Alaska PAO

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Here comes winter with new safety issues for kids and pets

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO



The holidays should be a happy time, with children dreaming of a visit from Santa and what they might find under the tree. To keep your holiday dreams from turning into nightmares, here are some suggestions to follow.

We all want our homes to look festive when family and friends stop by, but beautiful decorations can be hazardous to the health of small children.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends homes with small children avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children and avoid decorations that resemble candy or food that may tempt a young child to eat them.

Many holiday plants can cause severe stomach problems if eaten. These include mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis. To avoid a trip to the emergency room, keep dangerous plants out of children's reach.

The annual holiday party that everyone looks forward to is also a potential danger to the children in your home.

While you're in the kitchen cooking, make it a "kid free" zone. Excited children may get too close to the stove, and tip over pots and pans and get burned.

They may also not want to wait for the cookies you just pulled out of the oven, which may cause them to burn their mouths or their hands.

When the party is over and the guests are gone there is still work to be done before going to bed.

No matter how tired you might be, clean up that night so the toddler who rises early doesn't get hold of

the "party leftovers" such as alcohol in glasses or tobacco products left in ashtrays.

Children aren't the only ones facing potential danger during this holiday season.

Our pets also risk dangers during the holiday season. Capt. Nadine Schwegel of the Alaska District Veterinary Command provided tips about how to avoid a trip to the vet clinic:

Put booties on the dog. These are a must-have for any Alaska dog's wardrobe. Booties protect the feet from cold and ice balls that can form between their pads.

Booties also protect dog's pads from irritation caused by de-icing chemicals and salts on walkways. If you don't put booties on your dog, be sure to check their feet carefully after they've been outside.

Remove any ice balls and wash their feet if they have walked on a de-iced walkway.

Boots aren't the only must have in an Alaskan dog's wardrobe. Small or thin-coated dogs might appreciate a coat or sweater for their walks on those cold days.

However, even with a coat, dogs should not be left outside all day since animals can get frostbite just like people.

If it isn't comfortable for a person to be standing outside with just a jacket on, it probably isn't good for most pets.

"Only dogs like huskies who were bred for arctic conditions can tolerate extreme cold; most dogs will do better inside," Schwegel said.

Watch your animals around electrical cords. Cords should be kept away from chewing pets.

If your pet does manage to bite

through a cord, do not try to pull the animal off the cord. You won't pry the jaws open if the electrical stimulation clamps them shut and you'll get a nasty shock if you try. Unplug the cord then take care of the animal.

Never underestimate an animal's willingness to swallow something that has no resemblance to food.

Most people probably know to take their pets to the vet if they catch them munching on the shards of a glass ornament, but many people may not know that tinsel can be the deadliest thing on the tree.

String-like objects, when swallowed, are what vets call "linear foreign bodies."

If one end of such an object gets stuck and the other end tries to make the trek down the digestive tract, the normal peristaltic movement of the gut can cause it to saw right through the intestine.

Cats, especially, love playing with tinsel and the age-old image of a kitten happily playing with a ball of yarn may cause owners to think it is OK, but it isn't.

If your pet does swallow something like this while you are not looking and it doesn't get stuck anywhere along the line, you may find out about it when it makes its appearance at the other end.

If this happens, do not pull it out. Cut off whatever is visible and wait for the rest to pass naturally.

Keep the chocolate up and out of reach. It contains a toxin called theobromine that can be deadly to pets. Signs include trembling or nervousness, vomiting and/or diarrhea, muscle spasms, seizures, and rarely, coma or death.

The amount of chocolate an

animal would have to eat to reach a toxic level is variable and depends on the size of and sensitivity of the animal, and the type of chocolate consumed.

Just one or two ounces of cocoa powder or baker's chocolate is a fatal dose for cats and small dogs. If you catch your dog or cat with their nose in the bag of Christmas candy, consult your vet.

If your pet eats dark or bakers chocolate take it to an emergency clinic immediately.

The holiday plants that are dangerous to children can be just as dangerous to pets. Keep those plants where your pets can't get to them.

Also keep leftovers from your family feast out of reach. Feeding your pet food it is not used to or more than it usually eats can cause serious problems.

If either happens watch your pet carefully to ensure it does not need medical attention.

If your pet has mild, non-bloody diarrhea but isn't vomiting, is eating and drinking normally, and seems to feel well, it is likely just mild enteritis that will resolve itself with a few days of a good diet, Schwegel said.

However, if your pet has severe or bloody diarrhea, vomiting, isn't eating or drinking, and/or appears to have a painful or bloated abdomen, notify your veterinarian immediately."

Family and home safety should never take a holiday. Holidays should be memorable, and with these safety tips all your memories can be happy ones.

Winter driving tips for new and seasoned Alaskans

Staff Report, Fort Wainwright PAO

When preparing to drive, clean off vehicle completely. Cleaning off all lights and signal lights from excess ice and snow will allow you to see and be seen. Scrape all windows and mirrors and sweep all snow off the vehicle.

Ensure everyone is buckled up for safety - it's the law.

Prepare to leave earlier than usual; five to 15 minutes or more will allow extra time for safe traveling.

When starting out driving, at five mph, test brakes to make sure they are working properly, test road conditions and the vehicle's ability to stop or not.

Reduce your speed to match conditions; most accidents are the result of excessive speed. Driving at reduced speeds can allow for quicker stops when roads are icy.

Using turn signals sooner than usual gives other drivers more time to react.

Driving in snow and ice requires an increase of three times the braking and following distances needed for dry pavement driving.

Driving on snow and ice also requires more gentle and deliberate inputs to the steering wheel, brakes and accelerator. Excessive input to the accelerator, brakes or steering wheel can result in loss of control.

Thinking ahead is a critical part driving on ice. Anticipating a stop, lane change and the actions of other drivers can make a difference.

Driving on icy roads requires concentration. Keep both hands on the wheel and refrain from using cell phones, eating or other activities that takes hands off the steering wheel and creates distractions.

On hills or steep grades select the proper gear before approaching, usually a lower gear. Use the same gear going down that was used going up. This allows the engine to act as a brake and the brakes are not excessively used.

To make an emergency stop on icy roads with a regular brake system, pump the brake pedal. When driving a vehicle with an anti-lock brake system, press down and hold. The brake system will pump for you.

During front end skids, release the brake and let the front wheels roll freely to regain traction and steering control.

During rear end skids, release the accelerator and turn wheels in the direction that you want to go, and pump brakes lightly.

AFAP: Addressing Fort Wainwright issues at the local level



Private First Class, Matthew Schichels, 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, studies a list of topics covered by the workgroup during the Fort Wainwright Army Family Action Plan conference Tuesday at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center. Schichels was among a group of Soldiers, Family members and DoD civilians who evaluated topics and prepared an out-brief for command leadership staff. (Photo by Allen Shaw/Fort Wainwright PAO)

Continued from page 1

The working groups were a mixture of Soldiers, Family members and Army civilians. Army Community Service collected several issues from community members before the conference and presented them to three working groups which discussed each item, asked questions of designated subject matter experts and presented their recommendations to command leadership during an out-brief at the conclusion of the conference.

Each group participated in a number of team-building exercises to help open dialogue and sessions were led by experienced facilitators to keep the work groups on-task. United States Army Alaska Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Raymond P. Palumbo, addressed the delegates at the beginning of the conference and stressed the importance of the process. He said, "If we can solve problems here, we will. If it has to go further, we can do that too."

The Fort Wainwright Army Family Action Plan issues discussed were:

- Overseas living quarters allowance for civilian employees
- Army Emergency Relief for National Guard and Reserve Soldiers
- Family Readiness Support Assistance roles and responsibilities
- OCONUS vs. overseas term for Alaska
- Marriage reporting
- Family care plans for married Soldiers
- Student travel for deceased Soldiers'

children

- Sidewalk between high walking traffic areas – such as the Commissary, PX, Lodging and the Welcome Center/Child care payments
- Handicapped/expecting mothers parking spaces
- Storefront Military Family Life Counselors
- Transportation to Ladd Elementary school
- Teen transportation effecting middle and high school students who reside off post
- Fees for bus to and from Ladd Elementary School and School Age Service
- Transportation to and from School Age Service for all district zoned schools

Most of the AFAP issues are worked on at local levels to improve the community. Those items beyond the local level are forwarded to Headquarters, Department of the Army where delegates from across the Army determine what issues are to be addressed at the National AFAP conference. The selected issues are then presented to a board of key DoD and Army staff general officers and executive service representatives. A final determination is made as progress is reviewed and either resolved or designated unattainable.

Recommendations that were attained during the work sessions and presented to USARAK leadership will be made available at the conclusion of the conference.

The AFAP is an Army-wide initiative designed to help the Army identify and address issues that are important to maintain a good standard of living for Soldiers and Family members.

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness: Strong minds, strong bodies

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

Brig. Gen. Rhonda Cornum, the director of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program, visited Fort Wainwright Tuesday to talk about the program.

CSF is a holistic fitness program for Soldiers, Families and Army civilians designed to enhance performance and build resilience so they can thrive in an era of high operational tempo and persistent conflict.

In the past the Army concentrated on physical fitness, but with the demands being put on today's warrior, the Army recognizes that Soldiers (and others affected by the demands of today's mission) have other needs to prepare for battle as well, including psychological fitness.

"We really need to treat

psychological fitness just like we do physical fitness," Cornum said. "Psychological fitness matters and the time to become psychologically fit is not after you need it."

"We don't have everybody in the Army getting resilience training yet, but we are working on that," she said.

The program teaches five dimensions of strength: physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual.

These are trainable skills that anybody can learn, Cornum said.

Approximately one and one-half million Soldiers have completed the CSF training, including some who received the training at various Army schools, but only about 3000 Family members have gone through the course.



Brigadier General Rhonda Cornum, director of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program was at Fort Wainwright on November 15 to talk about the program. CSF is a holistic fitness program for Soldiers, Families and Army civilians designed to enhance performance and build resilience so they can thrive in an era of high operational tempo and persistent conflict. For more information on CSF and what the program can do for you and your family visit the CSF website: www.csf.army.mil. (Photo by Trish Muntean/Fort Wainwright PAO)

"The Soldiers that get the training should go home and tell their Families how important it is," Cornum said. "The next thing is that the Families should get online

and find out where their strengths and weaknesses are and then they have all the online training available."

"They should get some (training) and they should do it now, not wait until they are having some crisis. They should do it now," she said.

The first step for anyone to take advantage of what the training has to offer is to take an online survey commonly called the GAT (global assessment tool). It is comprised of 105 questions and takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. For those without an AKO account or CAC card there is a link at the top of the CSF home page (csf.army.mil) to register.

For Soldiers, the GAT measures many different qualities including psychological strengths, catastrophic thinking, cognitive flexibility, good and bad coping skills, spiritual fitness (but not religion), quality of friendships, loneliness, optimism, work engagement, social factors (trust, engagement

with others), depression, positive and negative affectivity and family fitness.

Because it is a self awareness tool, only you can see the results. Your GAT scores give you an accurate measurement of what your strengths and weaknesses are and where you may want to improve. You can work on some of the skills by completing the comprehensive resilience modules, found on the CSF website.

For Family members, the first step in the CSF is still taking the GAT. It is comprised of approximately 85 questions used to assess the dimensions of emotional, social, spiritual, and family fitness and takes about 25 minutes to complete. Any military Family member enrolled in DEERS may take the GAT, but the primary audience is spouses.

For more information on CSF and what the program can do for you and your family visit the CSF website: www.csf.army.mil



Brigadier General Rhonda Cornum, director of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program and Maj. Gen. Raymond P. Palumbo, commander U.S. Army Alaska were at Fort Wainwright on Tuesday to speak on a holistic fitness program for Soldiers, Families and Army civilians designed to enhance performance and build resilience. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Trish McMurphy, U.S. Army Alaska PAO)

HOME: There's no place like it

Continued from page 1

“Our platoon is on a rotating schedule with the other platoons in the company. We will help out with construction at Lion, pull guard duty at the towers and do dismounted patrols within the village,” explained Pfc. Alberio Porto, a driver with 1-5th and a Campina Grande, Brazil, native.

Dismounted patrols are a chance for soldiers to interact with the locals and assess the insurgency threat.

“We are starting to know the locals, and they are beginning to trust us. Trust has been a hard thing to build since the Taliban moved into this area, but [the locals] are welcoming of what we are doing here,” Peppin said.

village, or guarding COP Lion, the platoons are responsible for taking care of mission-essential equipment like vehicles, weapons and communications. Without this equipment, they wouldn't be able to complete the mission.

“We do most of the maintenance on the Strykers ourselves,” said Porto. “We have to make sure that everything is in working order, because if something breaks on us while we are on mission or dismounted patrol, it could be a matter of life or death.”

After nearly two months of construction, the men are ready to make the permanent move to COP Lion from their current outpost, COP Mushan, on the other side of Do'ab Village. For Nosaka, being at COP Lion is a way to continue



Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division “Arctic Wolves” use sandbags to reinforce the top of a guard tower at Combat Outpost Lion. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler/1-25th SBCT PAO)

When the Taliban moved into the area, the villagers began leaving the area for fear of being injured or killed. Since the expansion of the road through Do'ab and the added security of the Afghan National Police and 1-5th, Peppin said there has been an increase in villagers returning to their homes and crops.

“The more we interact with the villagers, the more they will begin to trust us. When they trust us, they tell us information about enemy activity in the area,” said Peppin.

When not patrolling the

honing his medic skills and, most importantly he says, stay connected to the war.

For Porto, moving to Lion is a matter of pride.

“You spend so much time building and patrolling and building some more, you want to get there and enjoy it.”

For photos reference this series see the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Flickr page: www.flickr.com/photos/1-25_sbct/sets/72157627856388923/



Pfc. Drew Johnson brings sandbags to the rest of his platoon, Oct. 19, at Combat Outpost Lion in Do'ab village, Panjwa'i province. Johnson, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, spent the day filling these sandbags and using them to reinforce guard towers around COP Lion as an extra means of protection. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler/1-25th SBCT PAO)



Pfc. Sky Noaska, a medic with 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, works on a shelf for the medic station, Oct. 19, at Combat Outpost Lion. Since September, COP Lion has been under construction as engineers with the 368th Engineer Battalion, Naval Construction Regiment, work on expanding a road through the village of Do'ab and bring COP Lion to fully-operational capacity. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler/1-25th SBCT PAO)

'Army Wives' reality comes to Alaska

Staff Sgt. Matthew E. Winstead, U.S. Army Alaska PAO

A Los Angeles-based production company is looking for military family members to cast in a new show about military spouses in Alaska.

The company, 44 Blue Productions, is developing what it describes as a documentary series for the Oprah Winfrey Network, or OWN.

The show, whose working title is “Army Wives of Alaska,” will focus on the real-world lives, struggles and sacrifices of military spouses stationed in the 49th state.

The show's existence is thanks in part to the efforts of Stephanie Woodard, whose husband, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian “Clint” Woodard, is a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot with A Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment at Fort Wainwright.

“I found information on an old casting for a show that never launched and asked if they were still looking for volunteer cast [members],” Woodard said. “They said no, but I started talking about some of the wives' experiences anyway and they got interested.”

Woodard feels there are important issues that

need to be explained to the American public and they can only be told from the unique perspective of the families of service members.

“I feel that there is a lot of fear and uncertainty when a spouse thinks about getting into a relationship that is headed toward the military, but if there is one message that I hope the average viewer takes away from this it is ‘I can do this,’” Woodard said. “Yes, there's tough times. Yes, there are fears that naturally come with a deployment, but the close bonds you can form with other military Families are unique and will get you through those times. No matter how hard someone tries, you just can't get that kind of understanding from someone who has never been in that situation.”

After several phone calls and meetings with producers at 44 Blue, the Army warmed up to the idea. Eventually, the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs granted approval for 44 Blue to cast volunteers for the show.

See ARMY WIVES on page 7

what is it? when is it? where is it? *find it here!*

Friday - 18th

KARAOKE FRIDAYS, 8 p.m. to midnight, Nugget Lanes Bowling Center Gold Rush Lounge, Building 3702. Call 353-2654.

STORY HOUR AND CRAFTS, 4 p.m., Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.
OPEN ICE SKATING, 5:30 to 7:45 p.m., Physical Fitness Center ice rink, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

Saturday- 19th

MILITARY APPRECIATION WEEK: ACS PANCAKE BREAKFAST, 9 to 11 a.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Call 353-4227.

MILITARY APPRECIATION WEEK: SESSIONS AND ACTIVITIES, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Arts and Crafts Center, Building 3727; LFCAC, Building 1044; Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, Building 3702. Call 353-4227.

MILITARY APPRECIATION WEEK: OPEN HOUSE, 5 to 7 p.m., Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard Area, Building 1172. Call 353-4227.

STORY HOUR AND CRAFTS, 10:30 a.m., Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

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

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

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

PARENT'S DAY OUT-SUPER SATURDAY, three sessions, Child Development Center I, Building 4024.
 9 am to 1 p.m., Cost is \$16
 1 to 5 p.m., Cost is \$16
 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Cost is \$32
 Register and pay by Nov. 10. Call 361-7713.

CUDDLE CURE CLASS, 10 a.m. to noon, Child Development Center, Building 4024. Call 361-7713.

SNOWMACHINE SAFETY COURSE, 9 a.m. to noon, Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Open to participants 18 and older. This course is required to rent snowmachines from the Outdoor Recreation Center. Call 361-6349.

Sunday- 20th

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

GOSPEL BOWLING, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, Building 3702. Call 353-2654.

Monday - 21st

SCHOOL AGE CENTER GRAND OPENING, 10 a.m., School Age Center, Building 4166. Call 353-7713.

GROUP CYCLING CLASS, noon, Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

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

Tuesday - 22nd

BOUNCY HUT NIGHT, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Call 353-7755. (ages 4 through 12 with parent).

Wednesday- 23rd

YOUTH CENTER OPEN HOUSE, 1 p.m., Youth Center, Building 4109. Call 361-5437.

HOOR OF POWER GROUP STRENGTH CLASS, noon, Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-7223.

OUR HEROES' TREE ORNAMENT MAKING, 3 to 6 p.m., Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

TURKEY BURN, 5 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Two hour fitness class consisting of: aerobics, strength, pilates and yoga. Call 353-7223.

OPEN HOUSE AND YOUTH AND FAMILY THANKSGIVING DINNER, 1 to 7 p.m., Youth Center, Building 4109. Call 361-5437.

Thursday- 24th

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY MEAL, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., North Star Dining Facility, Building 3416. \$5.97 to \$7, military Families welcome.

THANKSGIVING DAY BOWLING, 4 to 10 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, Building 3702. Call 353-2654.

Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard Area Open House



Although temperatures are dipping into the realm of extreme cold, the fun never ends at Fort Wainwright. The Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation is hosting an Open House and celebration at the Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard Area Saturday starting at 5 p.m.

Nick Pulice, manager said, "We will be there no matter what the temperature. It will be toasty in the lodge where visitors can learn about ski and snowboard rider safety, the rules of the road (slope) and find out about ski schools and season passes."

There will also be staff available to answer question about the new cross-country ski trails and an educational session on gun safety at the Fischer Skeet Range.

Musical entertainment is planned along with arts and crafts stations to make winter-season decorations that will adorn the facility. There will also be plenty of marshmallows, graham crackers and chocolate bars to make goodies by the fire. Jeffrey Suis, business operations chief, FMWR said, "We hope the temperature doesn't deter people from coming out because we still plan on having the bon fire."

The event is open to the public and the slopes are scheduled to open Nov. 25, weather permitting. For more information call 353-7053 or visit www.facebook.com/birchhill.ftww.

On any given Sunday, Monday and sometimes Thursday: That's what I'm talking about

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

Having National Football League games three days a week is a good thing. College football on Saturday is great. It's really nice that college basketball is getting additional coverage. Hockey fans are happy, but it's pretty sad when all my 13-year-old son wants for Christmas is the National Basketball Association to end the lockout and get back on the hardwood. It would sure save me some money when it comes to gift buying and that's what I'm talking about.

As for the NFL, the season is still wide open for most teams. But time is rapidly running out for Indianapolis. The Colts can only hope the season will end with them able to put something in the win column. They have a bye this week - that's a good thing. Maybe the rest will help them regroup. Then they play Carolina

in Indianapolis. Carolina only has two more wins than the Colts. After that they go to New England and then Baltimore - that's not so good. Then they go back home and face the visiting Titans and finally they go to Jacksonville to face the Jaguars. In my opinion, we Colt fans should just embrace the Met fan mantra, "there's always next year." It doesn't look good for the Peyton-less Colts. Last week they lost to the Jags 17-3.

In other games Oakland beat in-state rival San Diego 24-17, Tennessee put the hurt on Carolina 30-3 and New Orleans barely edged out the Falcons 26-23 in overtime. Pittsburgh outlasted the Bengals 24-17, St. Louis squeaked by the Browns 13-12 and Dallas punished the Buffalo Bills 44-7. Denver quarterback Tim Tebow led the

Broncos past KC 17-10, Arizona surprised Philadelphia 21-17 and Houston sunk the Buccaneers' ship 37-9. The Seattle Seahawks defeated Baltimore 22-17, the Bears mauled the Lions 37-13 and the San Francisco 49ers beat the New York Giants 27-20. New England outscored the New York Jets 37-16 in the Sunday night game and Monday night the Packers dominated the Vikings 45-7.

As it sits right now, the teams who seem to have it going on are the undefeated Green Bay Packers, San Francisco, the New Orleans Saints, Houston and Pittsburgh. But like I always say, there is plenty of football left to play. That's what I'm talking about.

The Fort Wainwright pickers made some moves this week - some good, some not so good.

Bear blasted through the week with 13 wins and 3 losses to increase his top spot into triple figures. Tate jumped up a few notches posting 11 victories and 5 losses to put him tied with the Brain in second place. A-Team posted 10 wins and 6 losses to move into the third spot, tied with the Jones Bros who dropped their overall with a miserable 7 and 9 week. BrowBrose Salsa also with 7 and 9 dropped a few notches to claim the fifth spot just ahead of Urbi, who although he had a poor showing this week has been inching up the charts.

It's time for someone (besides Bear) to make a serious move. Bear can comfortably hibernate with a 12 point advantage but no one is out of reach. That's what I'm talking about.

Week 11 in the Alaska Post football series



Bear

102 Wins / 44 Losses

NYJ @ DEN NYJ
 CAR @ DET DET
 TB @ GB GB
 DAL @ WAS DAL
 CIN @ BAL BAL
 OAK @ MIN OAK
 BUF @ MIA BUF
 JAC @ CLE JAC
 SEA @ STL STL
 ARI @ SF SF
 SD @ CHI CHI
 PHI @ NYG NYG
 KC @ NE NE
 TEN @ ATL ATL



Steve Tate

90 Wins / 56 Losses

NYJ @ DEN NYJ
 CAR @ DET DET
 TB @ GB GB
 DAL @ WAS DAL
 CIN @ BAL BAL
 OAK @ MIN MIN
 BUF @ MIA MIA
 JAC @ CLE JAC
 SEA @ STL STL
 ARI @ SF SF
 SD @ CHI CHI
 PHI @ NYG NYG
 KC @ NE NE
 TEN @ ATL ATL



Brain

90 Wins / 56 Losses

NYJ @ DEN NYJ
 CAR @ DET DET
 TB @ GB GB
 DAL @ WAS DAL
 CIN @ BAL BAL
 OAK @ MIN OAK
 BUF @ MIA BUF
 JAC @ CLE CLE
 SEA @ STL SEA
 ARI @ SF SF
 SD @ CHI CHI
 PHI @ NYG PHI
 KC @ NE NE
 TEN @ ATL ALT



A - Team

88 Wins / 58 Losses

NYJ @ DEN DEN
 CAR @ DET DET
 TB @ GB GB
 DAL @ WAS DAL
 CIN @ BAL BAL
 OAK @ MIN OAK
 BUF @ MIA BUF
 JAC @ CLE CLE
 SEA @ STL SEA
 ARI @ SF SF
 SD @ CHI CHI
 PHI @ NYG NYG
 KC @ NE NE
 TEN @ ATL TEN



Jones Bros

88 Wins / 58 Losses

NYJ @ DEN NYJ
 CAR @ DET DET
 TB @ GB GB
 DAL @ WAS DAL
 CIN @ BAL BAL
 OAK @ MIN MIN
 BUF @ MIA BUF
 JAC @ CLE CLE
 SEA @ STL SEA
 ARI @ SF SF
 SD @ CHI CHI
 PHI @ NYG NYG
 KC @ NE NE
 TEN @ ATL ATL



BrowBrose Salsa

87 Wins / 59 Losses

NYJ @ DEN NYJ
 CAR @ DET DET
 TB @ GB GB
 DAL @ WAS DAL
 CIN @ BAL BAL
 OAK @ MIN OAK
 BUF @ MIA BUF
 JAC @ CLE JAC
 SEA @ STL SEA
 ARI @ SF SF
 SD @ CHI CHI
 PHI @ NYG NYG
 KC @ NE NE
 TEN @ ATL ATL



Ed Urbi

82 Wins / 64 Losses

NYJ @ DEN NYJ
 CAR @ DET DET
 TB @ GB GB
 DAL @ WAS DAL
 CIN @ BAL CIN
 OAK @ MIN OAK
 BUF @ MIA BUF
 JAC @ CLE CLE
 SEA @ STL SEA
 ARI @ SF SF
 SD @ CHI CHI
 PHI @ NYG NYG
 KC @ NE NE
 TEN @ ATL ATL

For your information

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Families interested in adoption are invited to attend an information fair at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Wood Center, tomorrow from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. November is National Adoption Month. For more information contact Rachel Hanft, Alaska Center for Resource Families, 451-2095.

CASTING CALL

The Army in Alaska announced an upcoming television documentary series focused on highlighting Army spouses of Alaska. 44 Blue Productions is looking for Army spouses to feature in a documentary series for a major cable network putting faces to the names of unsung heroes like yourselves at home. If interested in being part of "Army Wives of Alaska," contact militaryprojectcasting@yahoo.com for more information. The production company will be meeting spouses in person in Alaska the week of Nov. 28.

LEGAL NOTICE

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Sgt. 1st Class Johnathan McCain, of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, may contact 1st Lt. James Desjarlais at Building 3409, Rhineland Avenue, 1-25th SBCT Rear Detachment, Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703 or phone 353-1345.

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Spc. Calvin Pereda of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, may contact 1st Lt. James Desjarlais at Building 3409, Rhineland Avenue, 1-25th SBCT Rear Detachment, Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703 or phone 353-1345.

FAIRBANKS EVENTS

Bazaar Weekend

Watershed School holiday local market showcasing local and handmade gifts, 5 p.m., today and tomorrow at the Watershed School, 4975 Decathlon Street; admission is free.

Ryan holiday bazaar, starting at 9 a.m., tomorrow at Ryan Middle School, admission is free.

Quota International holiday bazaar, starts at 10 a.m., tomorrow at the Alaska Centennial Center for the Arts, Pioneer Park; admission is free. For more information visit www.quotafairbanks.org

Two Rivers School Sugar Plum bazaar, starts at 10 p.m., tomorrow at Two Rivers School, 18.5 Mile Chena Hot Springs Road, admission is free.

ESC holiday bazaar, free and open to all ID cardholders, 10 a.m., tomorrow at the Aurora Club, Eielson Air Force Base.

Theater and Film

"It's a Wonderful Life" showing at the Riverfront Theater from Nov. 25 through Dec. 11, times vary, see website for costs at www.fairbanksdrama.org.

Free films on Alaska history, nature and more shown at the Morris Thompson Cultural Center. Shows for Nov. 20 through Nov. 26 are Bill Nye: Wetlands, 9 a.m.; Catch Me if You Can, 10 a.m.; Arctic Dance, noon; Goodtime Girls of the Gold Rush, 2 p.m.; Kuskokwim 300: 25 Years and Running at 4 p.m. For more information call 459-3700.

Things to Do

2nd Annual GeoFest, 1 p.m., tomorrow at the Wood Center, University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Free activities for children and Families based on the theme: "Geography, the Adventure in your Community"

Thanksgiving for the Birds, noon, Nov. 26 at the Creamer's Field Farmhouse, \$3 donation suggested. Make bird feeders and learn about birds, more information at www.creamersfield.org.

Sports

25th Annual Rookie Spiel
Nov. 26 and 27, all day, Curling Club is free for new players and those trying new positions, heated spectator gallery. For more information visit the website, www.curlfairbanks.org.

Fairbanks Ice Dogs discount hockey tickets for the Fairbanks Ice Dogs are available at the Fort Wainwright Armed Services YMCA office. Military pay \$9 for 12 and older, \$4.50 for children age 5 to 11; children 4 and younger Visit the Ice Dogs website for more details and a complete schedule.

TALENTED SOLDIERS WANTED

Soldiers interested in joining the U.S. Army's Soldier Show team as entertainers or technicians can submit application packages to the Warrior Zone, weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The song-and-dance production annually tours military installations, providing entertainment. Soldiers must be able to deploy worldwide. For more information, call 353-1085.

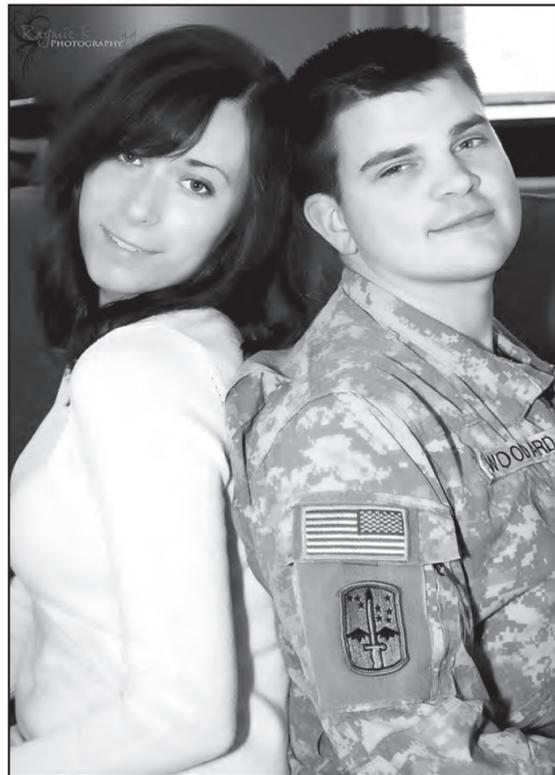
ARMY WIVES: Alaska Army on the home front

Continued from page 5

"This program will help to raise the awareness of the national community of the sense of duty that the Family has as well as the Soldiers in uniform," said Army Lt. Col. John Clearwater, film and television liaison for the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs in Los Angeles.

The show is the first of its kind to be approved for production on a military installation, according to Clearwater.

"This is a cutting-edge project," he said.



Stephanie Woodard and her husband, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian "Clint" Woodard, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot with A Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment at Fort Wainwright. The Fairbanks-based Army spouse helped generate a production company's interest in a show documenting the lives of military spouses in Alaska. Los Angeles-based 44 Blue productions is developing the show for the Oprah Winfrey Network, OWN. (Courtesy photo by Raymie Rushing Photography)

the fuel platoon assigned to A Company, 725th Brigade Support Battalion. "She has always been supportive. I couldn't be as successful as I am without her."

Stephanie Drachkovitch, one of the co-founders of 44 Blue, is uniquely qualified to help portray military Families in Alaska. The daughter of a career Army officer, Drachkovitch lived in Alaska, her mother's home state, while her father served in Vietnam.

"My mother and father actually met while he was stationed up there in Alaska during his first assignment there," Drachkovitch said. "Alaska is a beautiful area and I just so happen to know a little bit about the kind of bonds people can make while living there, which is just one of the many reasons I think the show will resonate with viewers."

Some of Alaska's greatest challenges are also some of its greatest attention draws. The state's arctic temperatures, dark winters, midnight summer sun and formidable wildlife can bewilder unprepared newcomers.

"We would love to see as many people apply for the casting as possible," Drachkovitch said. "We expect to ultimately cast the same number of families from each area (Fort Wainwright and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson) in the end, so everyone should feel free to still apply."

Many of the wives are doing just that. Traci Moran, whose husband, Spc. Jared Moran, is a paralegal representative for 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, has submitted her application in the hopes of getting a positive message out to the public.

"I wanted to make sure that we help show a true portrayal of a real Army wife," Moran said. "We're not all about drama and scandal. We're not completely helpless while our husbands are deployed either. We are strong, independent and able to fill the roles of our husbands while they're away. I want to do my part and help show how we hold things together while they're gone."

The show's producers say they hope there will be more families like the Morans willing to share their stories on "Army Wives of Alaska".

To apply for the show, e-mail militaryprojectcasting@yahoo.com to request a copy of the application form and instructions on submitting it.

You can find more information about the show on its Facebook casting page at: www.facebook.com/armywivesofalaskacasting.

Find us online

Facebook
FortWainwrightPao
Flickr
flickr.com/fortwainwright
Twitter
twitter.com/PAOFWA
Army news
army.mil
Army services
myarmyonesource.com

"There hasn't been a program similar to this at any time previously within the Army. This is an opportunity to show the nation just how much effort our military Families contribute to the service of their Soldiers. It's a commitment just as deep as [that of] any service member."

It is also a commitment that many active duty Soldiers say they couldn't do without.

"My wife has been an invaluable asset to me," said Staff Sgt. Germaine Pitt, a section chief for

Cavalry amputee re-enlists in Afghanistan

Sgt. Thomas Duval, 1-25th SBCT PAO

The U.S. Army defines selfless service as putting the welfare of the nation, the Army and your subordinates above your own.

On Nov. 9, Staff Sgt. Brian Beem stood in front of a crowd filled with his peers, superiors and subordinates alike to remind them of what selfless service looks like during a re-enlistment ceremony at Forward Operating Base Frontenac in southern Kandahar, Afghanistan.

At first glance, Staff Sgt. Beem, a cavalry scout with the 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, resembles many Soldiers that came before him to re-enlist: standing tall and taking pride in his decision to once again raise his right hand to serve his country.

It wasn't until Beem finished his oath and his speech to his comrades that one could see what



Col. Todd R. Wood, Commander of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, administers the oath of re-enlistment to Staff Sgt. Brian Beem, a Cavalry Scout assigned to the 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment during a special ceremony at Forward Operating base Frontenac Nov. 9. Beem is a single leg amputee who has continued to serve despite his injury. He lost his leg after a Improvised Explosive Device detonated during his 2006 deployment to Iraq. (Photo by Sgt. Thomas Duval/1-25th SBCT PAO)



Staff Sgt. Brian Beem, a cavalry scout and amputee, poses with members of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division command group following his re-enlistment ceremony held on Forward Operating Base Frontenac, Nov. 9. Beem is currently deployed with the 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1/25 SBCT, for a year-long deployment to southern Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Sgt. Thomas Duval/1-25th SBCT PAO)

made him different from the other Soldiers.

As the Poughkeepsie, N.Y., native began to walk, there was a noticeable limp, one that he tried to hide with a smile and a small nod of the head as he shook hands with everyone that gathered to witness the inspirational event.

It was the limp that reminded each Soldier what true sacrifice and selfless service was.

During a deployment to Iraq in 2006, Beem, 33, received the injury that would change his life forever.

On Oct. 10, 2006, Beem was riding in his Stryker vehicle when an improvised explosive device detonated, sending him to the ground gasping for air. After gaining his composure, the 13-year Army veteran assessed his fellow Soldiers riding with him. That's when he began to realize the severity of the explosion, as he found his battle buddy and best friend, Sgt. Nicholas Sowinski dead.

After performing checks on the rest of his crew, Beem began his own assessment.

"I knew right away my foot felt funny," he continued. "As I felt down my leg, I felt my knee, and then I felt what seemed like a second knee."

Beem was evacuated to Walter Reed Medical Hospital where the doctors fought to save his leg, but after a number of surgeries to reverse the infections and a number of attempts to repair the two missing arteries failed, the decision to amputate his leg was made.

Despite losing his leg, he continues to live his dream of being a Soldier, and in May 2010, he returned to Iraq for Operation Proper Exit. The program allows Soldiers who have suffered traumatic and sometimes career ending injuries to return to the battlefield and leave on their own terms.

The titanium leg that Beem relies on to walk will always be a reminder of the horrific day in Iraq. He refuses, however, to let it affect him finishing what he started and often jokes that the new prosthetic leg has made him

faster and somewhat of a "bionic" Soldier.

Beem's positive attitude and the Army's Continuing on Active Duty program have allowed him to continue his military service. After returning from Operation Proper Exit and receiving the support of his commanders and fellow Soldiers, he decided to secure his footprint as a cavalry Soldier, as he chose to join his fellow "Black Hawk" Soldiers of the 5-1st for their deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"He is a true inspiration," said Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph McFarlane, 5-1st senior non-commissioned officer in charge. "If we think that we have a bad day or this day is too hard, all we have to do is look at Staff Sgt. Beem and remember his bad day in October 2006 and then remember that he is still here with us today."

"To see him come in every day motivated and confident inspires me," said Spc. Jason Harris, a cavalry scout with the 5-1st. "It's amazing to see someone who can stay positive, even after going through something so tragic."

The Nov. 9th re-enlistment will be the last for Beem as he entered his indefinite stage, making him a career Soldier.

"From the time I enlisted in 1998, I knew I was a career Soldier," Beem said with a smile. "It's not about the paycheck. It's about the profession."

The sacrifice of Staff Sgt. Beem and the resiliency to recover from the devastating injury are two traits that he says most Soldiers possess. Although he would never accept being called a hero, he is often recognized as just that. Many people who have met Beem will say that it's not his actions on Oct. 10, 2006, or Nov. 9, 2011, that set him apart, it's his loyalty to a higher cause that distinguishes his service as selfless.

For photos of the ceremony see the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Flickr page at www.flickr.com/photos/1-25_sbct/sets/72157627965219391/detail/