



NEW ONLINE HOME FOR FAMILY PROGRAMS

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This page is **INTERACTIVE**.
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COVER STORY:

Matthew Wilson, Army Reserve Family Programs executive officer, checks the new interactive AFRP website in his office at U.S. Army Reserve Command headquarters Jan. 26, 2015. The new site includes several new features that makes the site a user friendly tool for Soldiers and families. (Photo by Brian Godette/U.S. Army Reserve Command)



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DOUBLE EAGLE





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Slimming My Social Media Waistline

Like many folks who start the new year with a plan to change something in their lives, I too will jump on the New Year's Resolution bandwagon.

My goal this year is to slim down my social media waistline - more than it is now.

For those who regularly read the "Double Eagle" you may remember I actually started this process in [June 2014](#).

At that time, I was following more than 700 sports, news, military, and federal government Twitter feeds. Meanwhile, I only had 186 "Followers" on my Twitter feed.

Facebook was nearly just as bad with more than 500 "Friends" on my account.

Really? Who has that many friends in real life? Maybe 500 acquaintances but that many friends?

Granted, in this line of work, I do meet many people. While I may be on temporary duty with them for a few weeks at a time, rarely does that short time together develop into a meaningful and lasting personal or professional relationship.

Hence, the slimming down of my social media waistline.

Now, I just didn't wholesale salami slice my "Following" and "Friends" list just to cull the numbers. I asked myself, "Who are these people and how often do we interact with each other?" Using a randomly generated number of five interactions (at least once a week plus one more), I started "unfollowing" and "unfriending."

I'm not talking about someone "Liking" or "Retweeting" something I've posted, I'm talking about an actual online dialog about a given subject, usually related to photojournalism.

It sounds cold, but really, if the last time we had an online interaction was more than six months ago, well, so long.

The process proved to be labor intensive - more than I imagined. Each month, I would devote a couple of hours to the task.

In the end, I think I have reached a reasonable number and feel that I'm on my way to a slimmer social media waistline.

My new social media waistline measurements are:
Twitter - Following 187 (down from 465 in June);
and Facebook - 238 Friends (down from 342 in June).



Timothy L. Hale
Editor

Overall, I really feel good about these numbers. However, my Instagram account is another story. Time to tighten up that belt! 🍷



Timothy L. Hale, a U.S. Air Force veteran, is an award-winning photojournalist and editor of the USARC Double Eagle. He is member of a number of professional organizations to include: Nikon Professional Services, National Press Photographer's Association, and the North Carolina Press Photographer's Association. The views expressed in this column are expressly his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, the Department of the Army, and/or the Department of Defense.

Family Programs Unveils New Interactive Website

Story & photo by **BRIAN GODETTE**
U.S. Army Reserve Command

FORT BRAGG, N.C. - - The Army Reserve Family Programs division, here at the U.S. Army Reserve Command headquarters, has completely revamped their organization website.

The new website, www.arfp.org, was unveiled in January 2015, ensuring continued access of information to Soldier's and Families.

Army Reserve Family Programs is designed to connect Soldiers, Families, and communities with a source of programs, training, and information to assist in the five phases in a Soldiers life cycle.

"The five colors in our new logo represent the five phases of a Soldiers life cycle," said Matthew Wilson, AFRP executive officer. "We support Soldiers new to the Army Reserve, Soldiers new to their unit, mobilization sustainment reunions, Soldiers assuming leadership roles, and transitioning Soldiers, either retiring or Wounded Warrior."

The AFRP decided to introduce a new webpage after implementing a new marketing plan which incorporated the new logo and brochures, but did not immediately update the organization website.

"We decided to go right into the 21st century," said Wilson. "We were in an old informational style page, where you go download documents and things weren't real sharp."

Wilson said the new website interface creates a one-stop shop for users, allowing them to access training, support groups, military resources, and the Army Reserve Family Programs Facebook page.

"A lot of Army sites are developed and are very structured and rigid, but this is Family Programs, so part of the site development was to capture what that Family member needs," said Dewanna Comer, web-design team senior manager.

The idea is to determine what brings worth to



(Photo courtesy/Army Reserve Family Programs)

the user and put that on the homepage, making it as accessible as possible, according to Comer.

“Our Family Programs directors and coordinators are all across the continental United States and overseas,” said Wilson. “So we’ve developed an interactive map that lets you hover your mouse over a state and the U.S. Army Reserve support specialist, the school support specialist, the Family Programs directors, all come up, making it very easy to find the help that you need.”

Another added feature and highlight is the Facebook-linked icon on the homepage that provides direct access to the ARFP Facebook page, a source of up to date information on programs and services in an already familiar platform.

The ease of navigation and accessibility on the new page gives the user a simpler way to find what they need, but developing the webpage did not come without its challenges.

“Accessing the site from different locations and

having it work on all the browsers as well as accessing it from a mobile device and ensuring it condenses to fit the screen, whether you are using Android or iPhone, was one of our challenges,” said Comer.

While the AFRP team and web designers tested webpage coding to get the uniformity they wanted for all browser applications, a strategy was also developed to keep information on the site up to date and timely.

“We worked collaboratively to put together a list of recurring events that we always wanted to discuss, so instead of someone having to remember, we have a pretty comprehensive, always evolving system,” said Wilson.

If there isn't something in the rotational program, there will always be an advertisement of the services in the sliders, according to Comer. This will help keep a stream of information and events consistent.

See **WEBSITE**, Pg. 6

ARMY RESERVE FAMILY PROGRAMS
Connecting Soldiers • Families • Communities

Fort Family 24/7 Assistance
Call 866-345-8248 or [Click Here](#)

Home Programs & Services Training Resources Contact

Family Programs Centers

Find your nearest Family Program Center on the map below (the Gs indicate states with Family Centers located in them) and click the state for contact information.

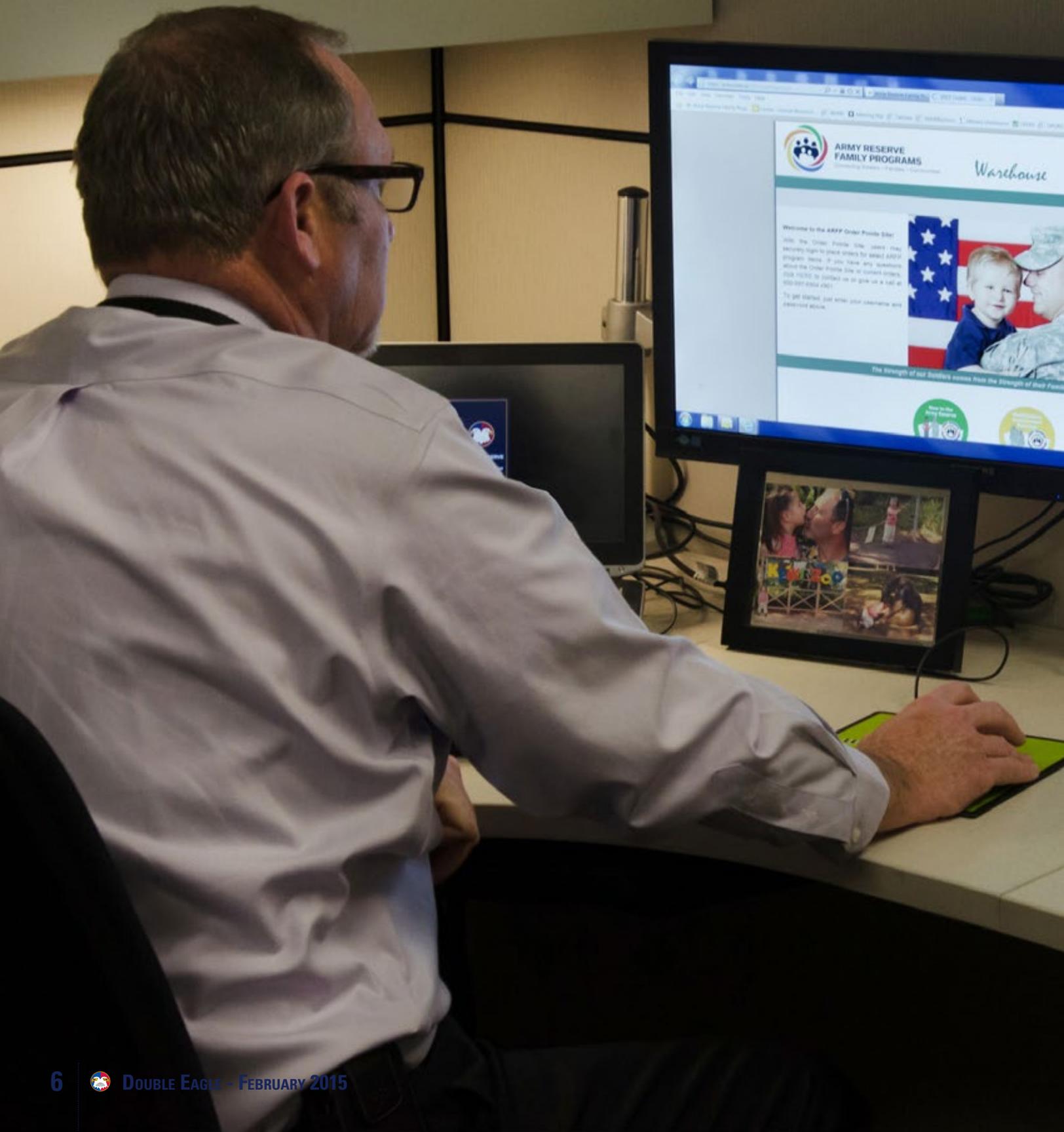
7th Civil Support Command
[Gary Gristleinko](#)
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1st Mission Support Command
[Elsa Cortes](#)
218 Brook St., Bldg. 354, Fort Buchanan, PR 00934-4802, [787.797.4982](#)

Family Programs Centers Map
Family Programs Centers by Command

UNITED STATES ARMY SOLDIER OUTREACH SERVICES

(Photo courtesy/Army Reserve Family Programs)





WEBSITE

from Pg. 5

“We also rededicated our effort in this office to look for and make the web team aware of things we need to talk about,” said Wilson. “Our goal is to never have anyone go to the site and say there is nothing new here.”

The AFRP team is looking towards the future of the website and interaction with its user base by focusing on possible changes to several areas that could be beneficial.

“An online chat, manned by some of the people at Fort Family is something we are looking at,” said Wilson. “If someone doesn't want to talk about their marital problems or something like that, they could type with someone and maybe feel more comfortable in that venue.”

Revamping the AFRP magazine, Family Strong, is also on the agenda, getting it up to date, fresh, and incorporated with the new logo, according to Wilson.

“My goal is to have people go visit the site at AFRP.org and give us feedback, tell us what's not there,” said Wilson. “I don't want anyone who has been on the old website to not know that we have a new website.”

The AFRP team remains steadfast in its mission to help connect Soldiers, Families, and communities, utilizing tools to simplify the process.

“We have good information that we are putting out there, we are keeping it up to date, and we encourage people to come look at it,” said Comer. 🌐

Finding balance across the mil-tech, civilian workforce

PART 2

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second interview in an on-going series of articles regarding civilian manpower reductions in the U.S. Army Reserve.

The first article in this series ran in the November 2014 "Double Eagle." James Balocki, the Army Reserve command executive officer, responded to questions about these reductions, the impact they will have on those identified, and mission readiness.

Below is the transcript from that conversation.

DE: When do you anticipate this to start happening or is it already happening?

JB: We are already providing assistance to employees through site visits and increasing our offering of retirement seminars.

As we work through the process of reducing positions, we will do our best to retain everyone who wants to continue to be a part of the Army Reserve family.

We'll offer reassignments, both voluntary and management directed, make available incentives like

early retirement and separation, and only when those tools are unable to achieve our objectives, turn to a reduction in force.

You'll see greater emphasis on providing guidance and assistance to employees in an effort to minimize the possibility of a RIF.

DE: How will employees be notified? By direct supervisor?

JB: Supervisors will normally deliver the notice to their employees; while this may not be possible in every case, any affected employee will receive a notice at least 60 days in advance of any action that eliminates the position they currently occupy.

The notification will also provide information and resources to employees to include fact sheets, information on the Priority Placement Program, and internal placement assistance.

DE: Will there be any severance pay packages?

JB: Eligible employees will receive severance

“In every instance, civilian members of the Army Reserve family are vital to our team.

We will do all we can to find a place for each one to remain a part of our organization. This may be difficult at times, but I hope we'll be able to keep all who want to stay.”

— James B. Balocki

U.S. Army Reserve Command Executive Officer

pay. Severance pay is paid to employees who are involuntarily separated from federal service.

There are eligibility requirements - an employee must complete at least 12 months of continuous employment and lose their jobs through no fault of their own.

Federal regulations provide a formula for calculating the dollar amount, but the total amount of severance pay that can be paid to an employee is limited to 52 weeks, about a year's salary.

This is a complicated area, because there are many rules associated with severance pay; our civilian personnel office is available to help anyone who needs more information.

DE: Will there be assistance in job placement?

JB: USARC is currently evaluating its internal placement program and special candidate tracker, and will publish more definitive guidance in the near future.

Generally, we will review our civilian vacancies as they occur to determine if there are any placement opportunities for employees.

We will make a determination if impacted employees are minimally qualified, and work with organizations to determine if a placement is possible.

DE: Are there any positions being targeted first?

JB: The Army Reserve is taking our initial reductions from the military technician program in fiscal years 2015 and 2016; we are reducing 1,000 positions from our workforce of about 9,000, an 11 percent reduction.

We're working with commands now to place employees who are serving in positions impacted by these cuts.

Attrition and turnover rates provide greater flexibility in managing our reductions in the aggregate.

We plan to follow our military technician reductions with Department of Army Civilian position reductions starting in Fiscal Year 2017-Fiscal Year 2018, 43 in each year.

DE: What can families expect?

JB: Families should know the Army Reserve is committed to employ every resource available to avoid potential RIF.

We understand reshaping an organization affects everyone, but for those who are filling positions whose function is being eliminated, it is a significant emotional event.

Please understand the decisions to eliminate positions are extremely difficult ones for managers too.

We will do everything possible to avoid involuntarily separating any employee from federal service; however, we can't promise this won't happen.

We've had good results in the past and have approached this reduction prudently, but it's difficult to predict how each individual circumstance might play out.

We will ensure the workforce is informed about the procedures, provide transition assistance, and information on benefits, entitlements, and retirement.

DE: Is there a grace period of employment from the time of notification?

JB: Employees will, at a minimum, receive a 60 days notification prior to any action with potential to adversely affect them.

There is no other grace period for continued employment with the federal government.

DE: Do you have any final thoughts?

JB: I have seen first-hand the contributions our civilian employees make to the mission of the Army Reserve. I've visited workplaces including AMSA, ECS, and OMS shops, every size of Army Reserve Center and our major commands.

In every instance, civilian members of the Army Reserve family are vital to our team.

We will do all we can to find a place for each one to remain a part of our organization. This may be difficult at times, but I hope we'll be able to keep all who want to stay.

I acknowledge this is hard on everyone, employees, colleagues, and families.

I sincerely appreciate your continued loyalty, skill and dedication of our civilian professionals.

Thank you! 🇺🇸



LEADER DEVELOPMENT. U.S. Army Maj. Gen. David Puster, right, 84th Training Command commanding general, shares personal experiences and career lessons with cadets at platoon operations during his visit to Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, Ky., in this August 2014 file photo. Puster spent the day discussing the Army profession with cadre and cadets. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti/104th Training Command)

Counting on You: Visot emphasizes leadership, from bottom to top

Story by **BRIAN GODETTE**
U.S. Army Reserve Command

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of articles regarding Operation Full Court Press and the manning and readiness of the Army Reserve. This article addresses the "Counting on You" program aimed at leaders across the force. Future articles will discuss readiness, career progression, counseling, and unit retention success stories.

FORT BRAGG, N.C. - Leaders have always played an important role in guiding, developing, and retaining Soldiers. With the Army facing financial cutbacks, and reduction in size, the role of leaders continues to be important to meeting mission success.

Maj. Gen. Luis R. Visot, U.S. Army Reserve chief of staff, spoke on the importance of leadership in an interview at the U.S. Army Reserve Command headquarters, here, Dec. 10, 2014. Visot highlighted ways to maintain and retain Soldiers in units, and on leadership in today's force.

With the enthusiasm of an Army Drill Sergeant, Visot said leaders must lead from the front.

"We have to show Soldiers what right looks like and what the standard is. The standard bearers for our Army is our non-commissioned officer," he said. "Our NCOs can apply what a standard looks like by understanding what discipline is, what engaged leadership is, what trust is, by exercising our body,

“T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Always Matters.”

— **Maj. Gen. Luis R. Visot**
U.S. Army Reserve Chief of Staff

heart, mind and soul and understanding what accountability and responsibility are.”

Visot said leaders must balance four things: intellect, presence, selflessness, and humanness. “If you are able to balance those four things I think you will be very successful as a leader,” he said.

The Army and Army Reserve have always utilized slogans and mottos to emphasize the importance of unity, discipline, and strength. Visot also understands the importance of strength in the Army, collectively, and the value everyone brings.

“T.E.A.M- Together Everyone Always Matters,” he said. “It’s about showing that we generally care and showing that we really want to connect with the individual at the highest level possible so we have an appreciation that there is value added to the team.”

It’s commonly said that a team is only as strong as its leader, and to Visot, that strength stems from trust. Down to company level command, Visot said the Soldiers have to trust leadership to understand their needs as well as trust them to provide meaningful training during battle assemblies.

“It is up to leadership to become more creative with the training schedule allowing time for administrative requirements as well as military occupational specialty specific task.

Schedule an FTX (field training exercise) every quarter and get Soldiers out to do Soldier stuff,” he said.

Visot said appreciation from leaders comes first, but must be followed by understanding of each Soldier’s development. That understanding is crucial in how leaders develop their Soldiers.

“Once you get to know who they are as a human being - because you understand where they came from, you understand their foundation, their values and the importance of the oath they have taken - then from there we can show that we can connect

with them,” he said. “Once we connect, we can communicate. Once we communicate, then we can show that we genuinely care.”

Visot said it is a big task for leaders to know the details of every Soldier in their command during the normal monthly weekend battle assembly. This is where front line leaders play a big role in Soldier interaction.

Visot said this care could develop the Soldier and a possible mentor. Every Soldier has someone in their ranks that they can look up to and learn from. Often that individual becomes a retention Soldier without even knowing it, simply by reflecting positive values.

Visot said retired Maj. Gen. Michael Gaw, his Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm commander served as a role model to him for what leaders should be.

“The manner in which he engaged senior leaders while at the same time ensuring that he cared for his Soldiers, really encouraged me to take a look at someone who is actually executing what I believe to be Army ethics and Army leadership,” Visot said.

Establishing a mentoring relationship is about the knowledge, the experience, and the training that can be maximized by the individual being mentored according to Visot.

“I’m a believer that success leaves behind various strategies that you can utilize in order not to reinvent the wheel, and can be applied to maximize mentoring relationships,” he said.

If the Soldiers can trust their leadership to provide good training, understand their needs, and respect their time, retention of those Soldiers will be an easier task, Visot said.

“All of us that are a part of this great organization called the U.S. Army Reserve have a legacy to leave the organization better than we received it, by bringing in and retaining Soldiers,” he said. 🌐

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“I hear you calling!”

Army Reserve Soldiers mentor Chicago teens



Steve Harvey, comedian and public figure, jokes with Chicago teenager for failing to pay attention during his speech. Harvey was talking to a group of 100 Chicago teens who grew up in single-parent households during the Steve Harvey Mentoring Weekend hosted at Chicago State University the weekend of Jan. 23-25. Approximately 20 U.S. Army Soldiers served as mentors throughout the event.

Story & photos by **SGT 1ST CLASS MICHEL SAURET**
416th Theater Engineer Command

DARIEN, Ill. – It’s a university campus, but this past Friday night, Chicago State University sounded more like a basic training base.

Military chants filled the January night air as Army drill sergeants and other Soldiers led groups of Chicago teens into cadence.

“I hear you calling! Calling for me!” one group sang, doing their best to keep military step for the first time in their life.

Except, these young men and boys were not signing up to join the Army. They’re on a journey toward manhood, and the Army was there to help them on their march.

Approximately 20 U.S. Army Soldiers, half of whom were Army Reserve, served as mentors to 100 teens from the Chicago area during the Steve Harvey Mentoring Weekend hosted on the Chicago State University campus Jan. 23-25.

“Our boys get to experience and see manhood firsthand with United States Army Soldiers because, as my father always says, ‘a boy without a male role model is like a an explorer without a compass,’” said Brandi Harvey, daughter of Steve Harvey and executive director for the Steve and Marjorie Harvey Foundation.

The teens ranged in age from 14 to 18, all of

them raised by a single mother or guardian. More than 3,000 applications poured in to take part of this weekend, but only few could be selected. The foundation also runs the same program in Dallas and one tailored to young ladies in Atlanta.

“You guys are proving that even as husbands and fathers and Soldiers, that you still give of your time and your talent to better serve and uplift them as they climb ... That’s what manhood is all about. It’s about doing the things you say you’re going to do. Being a stand-up man in your community,” said Brandi Harvey.

Even though several Soldiers traveled from other states to volunteer, half of the mentors are Army Reserve Soldiers from units in the Chicago area. All of the mentors were black Soldiers who could show the mentees first-hand the success they, too, could have in life. Their ranks ranged from specialist to full-bird colonel, each hoping to share personal life and Army lessons with the students.

“I can identify with a lot of the kids that’s coming here because, just like them, I grew up with one parent, grew up with my mother. Didn’t have a father ... The Army values teach you a lot about life in general ... (The Army) molds you and it teaches you how to take instructions, how to complete the mission, and I use that in everyday life,” said Sgt. Brian Abrams, an Army Reserve Soldier with the 863rd Engineer Battalion, living in Berwyn, Illinois.

Though new to this mentoring experience, Abrams was familiar

See **HARVEY**, Pg. 16



A Chicago teen, top, hugs his mother as they part ways for the weekend for him to attend the Steve Harvey Mentoring Weekend.

Staff Sgt. Dennis Howard, center, an Army Reserve drill instructor with the 2-330th Infantry Battalion, One Station Unit Training, leads a march of Chicago teenagers during the Steve Harvey Mentoring Weekend.

Chicago teens are divided into groups and assigned to Army Soldiers who would mentor them throughout the weekend.

HARVEY

from Pg. 15

with the CSU campus. He's an ROTC cadet there working on a bachelor's degree in community health. He hopes to commission as an officer once he graduates, which will help pay off his student loans and tuition costs.

His mother and aunt raised Abrams, so he had to learn about manhood from other sources.

"I learned from TV shows, from what I would see just on the streets. How to court a woman. How to open up a door for a woman. How to look a man in his eyes ... So I was excited that I was accepted to do this. It's really an honor because I'm looking at me, younger. If I had somebody to talk to me then, probably I would have graduated college already," said Abrams, who is 25.

Another Army Reserve Soldier who identified with the boys was Spc. Nicolas Laboy, an information technology specialist for the 416th Theater Engineer Command.

He turned to his uncle and grandfather as key male figures in his life, but he didn't have a way of paying for college until he joined the Army. Now, he's working toward a degree in computer engineering.

"The Army really changed my life ... Growing up, I was always told, 'You're not going to be able to do this. You're not going to be able to make it doing that.' ... Going into the Army got me confident in myself that I actually am smart. I actually can do something with my life," said Laboy, who is 21.

Laboy's age actually worked in his advantage. He said he was able to connect with one of the boys who didn't identify with some of the older Soldiers.

"You have to build a trust with your mentees, and have trust in your group. So that's a big part that I want to bring here," he said. "I know what you're going through. I've felt the same way you felt ... And this is where I'm at now."

The weekend was filled with team building exercises, motivational speeches and resources for those seeking education or career opportunities. On Friday, Soldiers taught the students basic Army "drill and ceremonies" movements as a way of instilling unity upon them. Later that evening, Steve Harvey had them write their goals on a piece of paper and made no qualms about the hardships they face, but charged them to overcome them.

"I have a lot of men in here who have volunteered to help me show you how to get something, and more importantly how to be something. But, I mean, damn, you've got to work that ... You ain't the only ones who don't have a relationship with your father. It's millions of young men just like you, and they turn out just fine," said Harvey.

During a two-hour speech that was as passionate as it was filled with Harvey's comedic spirit, Harvey pressed hard on the boys to think differently. He helped them envision their future and let go of whatever bitter past they may have had.

He started by pointing them to the back of the

Approximately 100 Chicago teens, who grew up in a single-parent household, learn military "drill and ceremony" movements from U.S. Army Reserve drill sergeants.





A Chicago teenager, above, has a moment of realization as Steve Harvey, comedian and public figure, tells a group of 100 teens to stop blaming their mothers for their life situation and to work hard if they aim to be successful in life.

room, where 100 mothers sat watching and listening as intently as their boys. Those women, Harvey admitted, cannot show their sons how to be men. But if these teens want to be men, they better start loving their mothers and not holding them responsible for their circumstances.

“They are the greatest gift you’ll ever have in this life. That’s what they are. They are your beloved mother. Now you owe her your life. Without her, you don’t exist ... You owe your dying breath. It is your obligation. First rule of a man is to honor and adore your mother,” said Harvey.

At one point in the speech, Harvey had the boys write down their career ambition on a piece of paper. He joked with some students who were “too small” to become linebackers, “too short” to become power forwards. He challenged them all to look beyond professional sports as the only golden career.

“Quit thinking: running, jumping, singing, dancing,” he told them. “The most dangerous and powerful tool you have is your mind.”

Thinking and hard work were the only keys to shaping a successful man, he said. Harvey admitted

he was successful not because he’s the funniest comic, but because he’s one of the hardest working people he knows. He wakes up at 4:00 a.m. daily and works through the weekends to uphold his success.

That’s a schedule the Army is familiar with. Now they were here, volunteering a weekend they could be spending at home relaxing. Instead, they chose not only to serve their country, but their very community.

“(Some people) think that anybody can join the Army. That the Army is a place of last resort. We all that are wearing this uniform clearly know that’s not the case,” said Sgt. Maj. Christopher Irving, with the Fort Knox Human Resources Command.

This is Irving’s second time serving in one of these mentoring weekends.

“These Soldiers that are here today are not only fathers but they’re leaders. They have experience, so they’re going to have an opportunity to give these kids some wisdom and some knowledge about life and about opportunities to wear this uniform. So I think that’s going to be critically important for these kids.” 

A Soldier's Reflection

Commentary by **BRIAN GODETTE**
U.S. Army Reserve Command

EDITOR'S NOTE: Brian Godette is a Department of the Army civilian with the U.S. Army Reserve Command Public Affairs Office, Fort Bragg, N.C. and a Public Affairs Soldier with the 382nd Public Affairs Detachment, Raleigh, N.C.

I held my son today. My daughters, who are 5 and 7, played dress up in my Army Combat Uniform. Watching them play "Army Sergeant," while holding my son, gave me a moment to reflect on my life and those who paved my way.

The night before, my wife and I took our three children to see the movie "Selma," which highlighted the course of action taken by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others to gain voting rights in Alabama during the civil rights movement. It was an educational tool for my children and a reminder for me that Black Americans have come a long way since those turbulent times.

The march on Selma for equal voting rights in America was 50 years ago. Five years ago, I pledged my military service to America. My grandfather's military service took him to Asia with the U.S. Navy in the Korean War. Today, I serve, and watching my kids play in my uniform, I see another generation in my family possibly serving.

My experiences in the military



Brian Godette

are undoubtedly different than what my grandfather experienced, and hopefully different from what my kids might experience.

Traveling from Brooklyn, N.Y. to Fort Benning, Georgia for Army basic training was an eye-opening experience. On one hand, I gained insight on military life and developed bonds of friendship that will last a lifetime. On the other hand, some experiences were not as pleasant.

For many young Soldiers, going to basic training is their first encounter with people who are from different areas of the country, with different backgrounds, ideals, and views. Racism was a common experience, and not one I was surprised to encounter. However, at 25, I was one of the oldest Soldiers in my training company. My age and understanding helped

me cope with the ignorance of others. Some however, physically displayed their frustrations, by causing brawls in the barracks. I often thought back to what my grandfather's experiences must have been as a black man in a similar setting, six decades before me. He endured his encounters at a time much more tense than today. If he could do it, so could I.

My military experiences have helped me grow as a Soldier, a father, and a husband, and allowed me the opportunity to visit countries I never would have dreamed of visiting.

In 2012, I deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, a place many Americans have yet to see. In Guantanamo, I worked with media representatives from across the world, analyzing different global perspectives. While interviewing a former Cuban national who worked on the U.S. naval base at GTMO, he expressed the similarities with his struggles in Cuba as a young man to that of black people in America during the civil rights movements. My eye-opening encounters only grew while I was in Cuba.

On several occasions, I helped oversee international media outlets during the pre-commission trials of the five individuals responsible for the 9/11 terror attacks. More than once, I looked the accused straight in the eyes - men who might hate me for who I am and

the uniform I wore. Interacting with those men as a U.S. Soldier and a native New Yorker could have given me the excuse to stare at them with hate, but my life experiences up to that point allowed me to look past them.

Toward the end of my deployment to GTMO I became a subject matter expert on Camp X-Ray, the first detention facility constructed on the island for detainees of the War on Terror. It has since become a vacant reminder - worn down and dilapidated by nature - of a frenzied, post-9/11 time that once was. A popular destination for incoming news media representatives, one remarked that walking through the abandoned facility gave him the same eerie feeling when he toured Auschwitz.

His comment weighed heavily on me two years later when my unit was sent to Eastern Europe to help support U.S. Army Europe and NATO initiatives. Most of my time was spent in Poland, which maintained the feel of post-Soviet control in many small cities. The beauty of Poland's nature was unparalleled however, serving as the first place I saw wild buffalo roaming in plush green grass fields (a military mission to South Dakota being the second). I spent several days working with Polish Soldiers as they trained with American allies. A trip, led by Pol-

ish Soldiers, to a World War II Polish Army museum revealed how far that country had come since the desolation of war. I visited six cities in Poland and could count on one hand how many other black people I saw - an observation my unit and I joked about - being the sole Black American member. Not once did I feel unwelcome, a thought which also made me reflect.

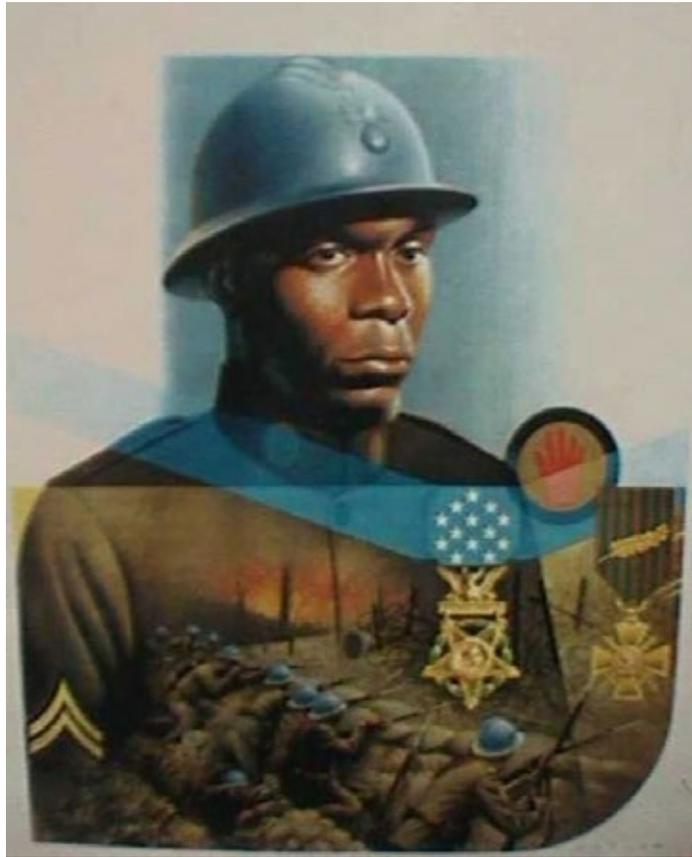
Before leaving Europe, we visited Berlin, Germany. Two battle buddies and I walked the streets of Berlin for hours, visiting landmarks and taking in the culture. The Berlin Wall and Checkpoint Charlie made me reflect the most; the lives lost, insecurity, and division. The city now is full of diversity.

Now, I'm back home, holding my son and watching my daughters play in my uniform. I appreciate the experiences given to me by the sacrifices of others, like my grandfather. There is still much to be sought after, like a greater representation of Black Americans in military occupation specific positions that do not currently represent much diversity, the end of racism, and the broadening of horizons.

My hope is that one day, my children will appreciate their own experiences given to them from the sacrifices made by not only myself, but those who came before me. 🇺🇸



Building International Friendships. Sgt. Brian Godette, right, a public affairs specialist with the 382nd Public Affairs Detachment, Raleigh, N.C., is shown with a Polish Army soldier during a deployment to the country in May 2014. (Courtesy photo/Brian Godette)



(Courtesy photo/www.armytogetherweserved.com)

World War I: The beginning of America's social, civil changes

Story by **JENNIFER FRIEND**

Museum Specialist, Office of Army Reserve History

World War I was tagged as the war to end all wars, however, it was also the beginning of military and civilian technologies as well as the beginning of social changes that would reshape and rethink the hearts and minds of all Americans. Steel helmets were used for the first time as protective gear for Soldiers. Chemical weapons in the form of deadly poison gases were used for the first time, which led to the development of the first gas masks. Tanks were introduced and machine guns were commonly used for the first time, changing the battlefield forever. Aircraft were utilized in war on a massive scale for the first time, for both air-to-air combat and reconnaissance missions and blood banks were created for the first time to help stabilize the wounded.

Although, this war was not the first time Black

Soldiers served and fought for America in battle, it was the first time the United States government mobilized the entire nation for war; to include both black and white Americans on an equal field. The government demanded “100% Americanism”; the draft was instituted.

Answering The Call

At the onset of the war, Woodrow Wilson did not see any reason for the United States to entangle itself in the European conflict. That all changed in 1917. On 2 April 1917, Wilson stood before Congress and issued a declaration of war against Germany and boldly stated, “The world must be made safe for democracy,” ensuring the rights for everyone on a global scale. African Americans saw this as their opportunity to bring about true democracy in the



Lieutenant James Reese, famous jazz band leader, pictured with the 369th Regiment in Europe. (Photo courtesy National Archives)

ing on the docks of Brest, St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, and other French port cities to load and unload crucial supplies.” It was hard work, aggravated by racial discrimination, yet essential to the success of the war effort.

Despite the obvious intolerance and prejudice of the military at that time, two black combat divisions were created and saw battle, the 92nd and 93rd, which were made up of approximately 40,000 troops. Still hesitant in using black Soldiers in combat, the American army “loaned” the 93rd Division to the French army. It was the only American division to serve exclusively under French command. The division’s four regiments performed exceptionally well and received numerous commendations.

The 93rd Division’s 369th Infantry Regiment from New York (formerly the 15th Regiment New York Guard), became the most famous African American fighting unit during World War I, the “Harlem Hellfighters.” The regiment gained notoriety on two fronts; for its world-class band and combat performance. The band was led by the celebrated James Reese Europe and made up of top musicians from the United States and Puerto Rico. Europe’s band, along with other black regimental ensembles, popularized jazz to a war-torn French nation already fascinated with black culture. The 369th received equal praise for its combat performance. Two soldiers of the 369th, Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts, were the first American soldiers, black or white, to receive the French Croix de Guerre (War Cross). The regiment served for 191 days and surrendered no ground to German forces. They were the first American regiment to reach the Rhine River in Germany following the armistice and returned to the United States as national heroes.

Standing Out

In addition to the many acts of courage and bravery displayed throughout the thousands of black troops that served, Corporal Freddie Stowers with the 371st Infantry Regiment, 93d Division, was cited for the Medal of Honor for his actions at Hill 188, Champagne Marne Sector, France, on 28 September 1918. According to Stowers’ citation,

See **STOWERS**, Pg. 22

United States; a way to demonstrate their patriotism and place as equal citizens in the nation.

It is estimated that over one million African Americans responded to their draft calls, and approximately 370,000 black men were inducted into the army. Although the proclamation went out to all Americans, the call up did not go without its problems. Riots ensued, Americans were killed, and segregation was an active part of military life. African American women were just as active in the fight for patriotism by forming organizations in support of black troops. They joined war service organizations such as the YWCA and the Red Cross, and established their own groups, like the Women’s Auxiliary of the New York 15th National Guard.

Overseas

Over 200,000 black Soldiers crossed the Atlantic and served in France. They primarily served in service units, known as the Service of Supply (SOS). According to a study conducted and published by the New York Public Library, “They dug ditches, cleaned latrines, transported supplies, cleared debris, and buried rotting corpses. The largest number of African-American SOS troops served as stevedores, work-

STOWERS

from Pg. 21

“... With extraordinary heroism and complete disregard of personal danger under devastating fire, he crawled forward leading his squad toward an enemy machine gun nest, which was causing heavy casualties to his company. After fierce fighting, the machine gun position was destroyed and the enemy soldiers were killed.

“Displaying great courage and intrepidity Corporal Stowers continued to press the attack against a determined enemy. While crawling forward and urging his men to continue the attack on a second trench line, he was gravely wounded by machine gun fire. Although Corporal Stowers was mortally wounded, he pressed forward, urging on the members of his squad, until he died.

“Inspired by the heroism and display of bravery of Corporal Stowers, his company continued the attack against incredible odds, contributing to the capture of

Hill 188 and causing heavy enemy casualties.”

Shortly after his death, Stowers was recommended for the Medal of Honor; however, this recommendation was never processed. Suspicions of institutional racism regarding Medal of Honor recipients, initiated a study in 1990.

At the request of Congress, the Department of the Army conducted a review and the Stowers recommendation was uncovered. Subsequently, a team was dispatched to France to investigate the circumstances of Stowers' death.

Based on information collected by this team, the Army Decorations Board approved the award of the Medal of Honor.

On April 24, 1991 Stowers' surviving sisters, Georgina and Mary, received the medal from President George H. W. Bush at the White House. 🇺🇸



After the posthumous presentation of the Medal of Honor made to the sisters of Cpl. Freddie Stowers, a native of Anderson County, S.C., for action during World War I by President George H. W. Bush at the White House, April 4, 1991, Barbara Bush and Mary Bowens, Stowers' sister, admire the Medal of Honor certificate. His other sister, Georgina Palmer (far left) looks on. Stowers is the only Black American to receive the Medal for action during World War I. (Image and caption credit: National Archives)

OPERATION LOVE LETTERS: REFLECTIONS FROM THE HEART

Story by **BARBARA GIDDENS**

Army Reserve Family Programs Liaison/Survivor Outreach Services

February is the month of love and there is no doubt that this is the time of year when we reflect on our loved ones, whether they are with us or not.

Operation Love Letter originated three years ago as the brainchild of Survivors in Orlando and Tampa, supported by the Orlando Army Reserve Survivor Outreach Services Staff.

Operation Love Letter started as a peer-to-peer Survivor event in which Survivors commemorated their Fallen Soldier's love for country. Since its inception in Orlando, OLL has become a celebration of life through fellowship with Family and friends gathered together writing love letters, scripting poetry, creating greeting cards, and sharing stories about their fallen loved ones.

It is a festive atmosphere created to capture the beauty of life and love while encouraging resilience through empowerment and affirmation. Most of all, it provides an atmosphere for Survivors to bond and create new relationship with other Survivors. It also provides an opportunity to interact with community partners and command resources such as the local

chaplain, and the Child, Youth Services and School Support Staff. This event is successful because it is Survivor-led and their children are key participants. With words of healing and encouragement flowing freely, the event culminates with the release of the love letters, symbolic of released emotions of love for their Soldiers and renewed hope.

This February, all Army Reserve Survivor Outreach Services Teams have been challenged to add Operation Love Letter as an annual event to their locations to further cultivate peer-to-peer Survivor support. This event also continues the Survivor Outreach Services mission of supporting, and aiding Survivors in staying connected to the Army for as long as they desire, closest to where they reside. Contact the Army Reserve Survivor Outreach Services Program to get more information on Operation Love Letter at 910-570-8370.

To see how a local news channel captured the essence of what this event has meant to one Survivor, click the following link. <http://www.clickorlando.com/seenon6/making-a-difference/1947682>.

"My love for my son is as strong now as it was the day he died, and so is the pride I feel for the man he was. ... Although I would give everything I own if he were still here safe and sound, I do find comfort in the knowledge that he died doing what he loved, and doing something that he truly believed in."

**Debby Agnew for
Staff Sgt. Clinton T. Newman**

"The irony of her death is that, in other circumstances, she would have stayed and cared for the very man who shot her, true to the creed to never leave a fallen comrade. ... Juanita's last words expressed her realization that she was not going to make it and to tell her family that she loved us. There was never a more gentle and loving companion."

**Phillip Warman for
Lt. Col. Juanita Warman**

BRING IT HOME 2015: 28 DAYS FOR LIFE

Story By **JOHN L. HANSON**
USARC Command Safety Director

Safety is a critical mission component for the United States Army Reserve in every duty status.

Whether On, Off or Not in a Duty Status, our leaders, Soldiers and civilians are going beyond the call to ensure all risk decisions are both informed and managed to the lowest possible risk.

Since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2012, Safety leadership from all levels of the Army Reserve has netted a 40 percent reduction in the total number of fatal accidents!

This is huge news since historically, almost every fatal Army Reserve accident is found upon investigation to have been a fully preventable accident.

And, how did you get there? Leadership, pure and simple.

Starting in Fiscal Year 2012, U.S. Army Reserve Command Safety and major subordinate command Safety offices ramped up focus on safety and risk decision making in every duty status.

From stronger commanders safety policy letters to safety educational efforts, On and Off Duty fatalities began a slight downward trend from their already lowest of all the services level.

In our most challenging area (due to the lack of Command and Control when Troop Program Unit Soldiers are civilians the other 28 days of the month) Not in a Duty Status fatalities dropped 30 percent in Fiscal Year 2013!

Seeing that more can and must be done, the Chief, Army Reserve launched his Bring It Home, Your Professional Discipline Safety Campaign early in 2014.

In the campaign, Lt. Gen. Jeffrey W. Talley expressed his genuine concern for individual Soldier Safety and communicated his clear expectation that a Citizen-Soldiers professional discipline is “The expected and critical countermeasure for Safety” regardless of location or duty status.

In Fiscal Year 2014, Not in a Duty Status fatal accidents dropped another 20 percent!

We believe this is due to the combination of leader concern, Safety manager educational effort and most critically, the commanders’ messages of Concern and Expectation reaching individual Citizen-Soldiers throughout the force.

In February 2015, the Army Reserve will continue to “Bring It Home” with “28 Days For Life!”

Approximately 90 percent of Army Reserve fatal accidents occur while Citizen-Soldiers are Not in a Duty Status. Citizen-Soldiers typically die in largely preventable accidents, close to home and view of family and friends.

Let’s all be ready to continue the concerned leadership and communicate the clear expectations that influence Citizen-Soldiers to be accountable for their own Safety regardless of duty status or location. 🇺🇸

ARMY RESERVE FACT:

2014 Bring It Home Facts: Since the implementation of the Lt. Gen. Jeffrey W. Talley’s “Bring It Home Campaign,” the Army Reserve has continued on a downward trend in TPU (Not in a Duty Status) Fatal Accidents with a total of 44 in Fiscal Year 2012, 31 in Fiscal Year 2013, and 25 in Fiscal Year 2014. Note: AGR/TPU (In a Duty Status) Fatal Accidents numbers remain at an all time low with 4 in Fiscal Year 2012, 2 in Fiscal Year 2013, and 4 in Fiscal Year 2014. These are the lowest numbers of Army Fatal Accidents in Army Reserve history and the lowest of all three components from Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2014.

DON'T LEAVE YOUR PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE BEHIND

From Your Valentine

By CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) RAYMOND W. LEACH
USARC Chaplain's Office

The origin of Valentine's Day holds a different meaning and greater significance than most of us realize.

Along with his horrific persecutions of Christians, the emperor Claudius Gothicus banned marriage during his two-year reign from 268-270 AD.

This was based on the belief that unmarried Soldiers were more resilient because they had no family to be concerned about should they be injured or killed in battle.

Valentinus, now referred to as Saint Valentine, was a Christian priest during this time.

Because of the Church's high view of the sacredness and sanctity of marriage, Valentine secretly consecrated the marriage vows of the Christian couples who came to him to be united in holy matrimony.

Ultimately found out, Valentinus was put in prison, tortured, and even martyred for disobeying the Roman edict of Emperor Claudius the Second.

As legend has it, one of the men condemning him had a blind daughter who was healed by Valentine's prayers.

As he approached his execution by beating, stoning and decapitation, Valentine wrote a final note to

the young lady, and signed it, "from your Valentine."

This obviously doesn't line up with the shallow, romantic nature of the holiday as it is now celebrated. It offers us a much truer, fuller, and more deeply meaningful view of love.

In a culture where love is often simply seen simply as a passionate feeling that flames up, then smolders, and eventually flickers and dies, we are in need of a richer understanding of love.

Saint Valentine offers us one.

His loving, sacrificial, selfless service models Jesus teaching about love in the Gospel of John, chapter 15, *"I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love...I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends."*

Love your family, friends, and fellow Soldiers and Army Civilians deeply, from the enthusiasm of your heart, but also from the commitment of your mind, the connection of your spirit, and the discipline and strength of your actions. 🇺🇸

FORSCOM/USARC Christian Bible Study

U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Army Reserve Command hosts a weekly Christian Bible study.

Studies are held each Tuesday, starting at 11:30 a.m., Room 1901 near the USARC G-4.

Please come and share a time of fellowship and worship with us.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

Second Timothy 3:16-17

Double Eagle Effect: USARC headquarters employees are surprised by recognition



SURPRISED. Maj Gen. Luis R. Visot, U.S. Army Reserve Chief of Staff presents Cheryl Tompkins, U.S. Army Reserve Command intelligence specialist, with a two-star note and coin as a part of the Double Eagle Effect program at USARC headquarters Jan. 9. The DEE program recognizes teammates who are role models in how they perform their assigned duties and reflect positively upon the organization.

Story & photos by **BRIAN GODETTE**
U.S. Army Reserve Command

FORT BRAGG, N.C. - Maj. Gen. Luis R. Visot, U.S. Army Reserve Chief of Staff, along with his command team, surprised the first two recipients of the Double Eagle Effect, or DEE, recognition program at the U.S. Army Reserve Command headquarters Jan. 9.

Master Sgt. Jose Michaelangelo Calora and Cheryl Tompkins, both with the G6, became the first recipients, receiving a two-star DEE Note and coin

from Visot as part of the new program.

The DEE program provides anonymous acknowledgement through peers and supervisors. The personnel nominated for this recognition must have demonstrated “a random act of kindness and giving” while also demonstrating a positive attitude, teamwork, and willingness to go the extra mile in support of and in assistance to others.

“It’s a way for us to recognize those silent, qui-

et, professionals who are doing day-to-day work to support each and every one of the Soldiers we have in the U.S. Army Reserve,” Visot said.

The headquarters level recognition, which includes the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve at Fort Belvoir, Va., and the U.S. Army Reserve Command, was initiated by Visot Jan.1 to highlight the exceptional performance and selflessness which reflects positively upon the individual, the directorate, and the organization.

“The Double Eagle Effect is based on the US-ARC symbol, which represents vigilance and a wide-ranging scope of ability and expertise,” said Col. Eddie Rosado, USARC assistant chief of staff. “As a noun, ‘effect’ means the result or outcome of a cause, so through an individual’s random act of kindness or performing beyond the call of duty, they are using their wide range of ability and expertise to positively impact the organization.”

As Visot and his team approached the cubicles of Colara and Tompkins, the initial look on their faces was confusion.

He exchanged pleasantries, only slightly hinting towards why he was there.

The looks of confusion and surprise turned to smiles as Visot explained the purpose of his visit and presented each unsuspecting nominee with a personal two-star letter and coin.

“I was dumbfounded, surprised,” said Tompkins. “Out of all the civilians that work in the organization, they chose me.”

Tompkins, who is originally from the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans, has been working as a government employee since 2009, and said she’d never received an award from the organization until now and was humbled by the experience.

“From a civilian perspective, it’s letting all the civilians know that we are appreciated, and it’s good to know that leadership respects the worker bees,” said Tompkins. “This is awesome.”

“From my perspective, I just felt the need, the need to find a way to show our appreciation for our team,” Visot said. “Part of my mantra recently has been, seize the moment, be memorable, and leave a legacy. This is my way of trying to seize that moment.”

The DEE program is closely related to another program developed by Visot called “A Day With The COS.” This program supports the professional development of civilians and Soldiers in the headquarters with a focus on enhancing personal and professional skills and providing exposure to executive level decisions, engagement, and actions, many of which occur at the chief of staff level.

Unlike the DEE program, which are spontaneous nominations submitted at anytime for anyone, “A Day With The COS” is a quarterly submission that requires a 500-word essay, by interested individuals, in a selected rank status.

Both programs are designed to enhance the quality of the individual, the directorate, and the Army Reserve. 🇺🇸



HONORED. Maj Gen. Luis R. Visot, U.S. Army Reserve Chief of Staff presents Master Sgt. Jose Michaelangelo Calora, U.S. Army Reserve Command G6 employee, with a two-star note and coin as a part of the Double Eagle Effect program.

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