

Your Well-Being Information Resource

Well-Being Liaison Office (WBLO)



FLO Notes



A Family Like No Other – Providing For A Relevant And Ready Army

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WBLO Chief's Corner

Sorrowful goodbye

We are sad to say good bye to a friend and colleague of Army Soldiers and families worldwide.

During the past two years Marion Sakowitz has served the Well-Being Liaison Office with dignity and brought a level of expertise and professional bearing to everyone she has touched.

She followed in a long line of very distinguished professionals who have served this office with distinction by making a significant impact on the Well-Being of our people.

Marion spearheaded the WBLO's Disabled Soldier Support System effort marking a pivotal moment in the Army's history of providing for our Soldiers who have either been hurt beyond a 30% disability or were severely injured.

The Well-Being Liaison Office was a major element in this effort by standing up the DS3 Web site, conducting outreach operations and representing the Army family during the planning stages of this great effort.

Marion was the WBLO lead in the conduct of outreach and planning stages of DS3. Because of her efforts we are proud to note that we contacted well over 700 Soldiers and family members in the past year.

The WBLO's dedicated Army Information Line was the backbone of this operation with Marion as their manager. Countless hours beyond the

contracted 40 hours per week mark the intensity of effort she spearheaded.

Marion's actions, attention to detail, expert advice and profound caring for the welfare of our people has made a significant impact on the Quality of Life and Well-Being of the Army's Soldiers, retirees, veterans, civilians and families.

I will deeply miss Marion, her gentle mentorship, guiding hand and the results of her selfless dedication to the Well-Being of our people.

Free stuff for troops, families via the Internet

Many organizations set out to provide support to Soldiers and their families during a period of time when our nation is actively engaged in waging a Global War on Terrorism.

The following list of Internet links is a sampling of this support. Additionally, many of these sites provide information on how people can get involved, and in some cases even make donations of various types to help support the cause:

Operation Homelink — www.operationhomelink.org — is a non-profit organization that exists to help facilitate e-mail communication between deployed Soldiers and their families back home.

Recognizing that many lower income families are not able to afford a computer, and therefore must rely on expensive phone calls or postal service to stay in touch, Operation Homelink pro-



vides free, refurbished, computers to the spouses or parents of Soldiers in Grades E-1 to E-5.

My Little (Military) Mailbox — www.mylittlemailbox.com, or www.SarahSmiley.com — “Syndicated military columnist and Navy wife Sarah Smiley, along with her site “Shore Duty,” has teamed up with “My Little Mailbox” to offer unique fun and greetings for a very special group of children — the boys and girls who wait while their parent, or parents, serve overseas,” according to a press release from PRWeb.

Registered dependent children will receive a delivery from “My Little (Military) Mailbox” that includes a note from a favorite character or “pen pal,” and a special surprise (stickers, craft, or small present). Additionally, the deployed servicemember parent will have the opportunity to select what their child's note says, which pen pal it will be from and what surprise will be included.



Operation Uplink — www.operationuplink.org — Operation Uplink keeps Soldiers and hospitalized veterans in touch with their families and loved ones by providing them with a free phone card. The program relies on contributions from supporters to purchase phone cards and distribute them to Soldiers who are separated from their loved ones.

AnySoldier.com — www.ansoldier.com — AnySoldier.com provides contacts for where to send letter and

care packages to deployed Soldiers. The site provides a listing of what Soldiers need, and ensures that Soldiers who do not receive much or any mail get a little something special.

Appreciate and Thank Our Troops — www.appreciateourtroops.org — Appreciate and Thank Our Troops sponsors Operation “Mug a Troop,” which affords people the opportunity to purchase a Troop Appreciation mug set. For each set sold, a personalized partner mug, which features the Soldier’s name and rank, is made and sent to a Soldier.

Operation Shoebox — www.operationshoebox.com — This program encourages citizens to show their support for deployed Soldiers by sending shoebox-sized care packages, or posting messages of support.



Blue Star Moms — www.bluestarmoms.org — Blue Star Moms is a support and service group of mothers who joined together to share their worries, pride and devotion to their loved ones’ service in all branches of the U.S. armed services, and is an official chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. Blue Star Moms offers two particularly interesting opportunities through their Web site.

The first is Fair Military Airfare (www.bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html), which features information about legislation signed by President Bush on Dec. 17, 2003, which provides for reduced airfare for active-duty service-members.

The second is Care Packages (www.bluestarmoms.org/care.html) — in which the organization addresses care packages to deployed sons and daughters of families who have contacted the Blue Star Moms. Included with each care package is a letter that asks the Soldier to share the package with his or her unit.

Operation Air Conditioner, Inc. — <http://66.241.249.83> — Since June 2003 Operation AC has been sending 110v single-phase air conditioners to our troops in Iraq. The organization also provides voltage converters, as many of these units are powered by

220v generators. Since the program began, the organization has also adapted their effort to include sending the troops items that may be hard to find in Iraq as well. Despite having sent more than 9,000 air conditioning units to Iraq thus far, the organization still receives many requests.

Operation Hero Miles — www.heromiles.org — Operation Hero Miles provides a way to assist Soldiers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan by donating unused frequent flyer miles, as well as providing family members of wounded Soldiers with travel to medical facilities



Prayer Central — <http://prayercentral.net/engage/militaryprayer/daily.php> — Prayer Central offers daily devotionals and prayers for our Soldiers and families.

Military Moms “Support Our Troops” — www.militarymoms.net/sot.html — Military Moms provides a place for family members to sign up their Soldier to receive care packages, which are built from donated items.

Operation Military Pride — <http://operationmilitarypride.org> — Operation Military Pride is a volunteer organization with a wide range of activities — all of which seek to boost the morale of our troops deployed overseas. The organization not only sends cards, letters and care packages, but also distributes troop names and addresses to patriots wanting to send cards, letters or care packages directly to troops.



Soldiers’ Angels
“May No Soldier Go Unloved”

Soldiers’ Angels — www.soldiersangels.org — Soldiers’ Angels was founded by Patti Patton-Bader, the mother of a Soldier who has recently returned from a year’s deployment to Iraq. Started in June 2003, Soldiers’ Angels is a volunteer run, non-profit organization, incorporated in the state of Nevada. The organization’s mission is to provide aide and comfort to any

of the armed forces and their families.

The volunteers of Soldiers’ Angels send care to deployed Soldier’s and their loved ones at home.

To date they have sent thousands of care packages to deployed Soldiers, helped the wounded at three major military hospitals and provided assistance to many military families.

Treats for Troops — www.treatsfortroops.com — Treats for Troops was founded in early 2003 by a Denver business woman, who was determined to make it safe and simple for every American to send packages and messages of support to our men and women in uniform year round.

Since the Treats for Troops Gift Shops opened in June of 2003, friends, family members, groups, organizations and individual sponsors have sent over twenty tons of treats to American Soldiers through Treats for Troops.

Individuals, organizations and groups who don’t personally know anyone in the military, but want to show their support can sponsor Soldiers through the organization’s Foster-A-Soldier Program. Sponsors can choose their Soldiers by branch of service, home state or gender.

Army goes live with Web registry for childcare

The U.S. Army Family Child Care program now offers a Web-based information and referral tool for parents considering using home-based care — www.armyfcc.com.

The FCC program provides service-members or qualified civilians a home away from home for their children through military family members or independent contractors in individual housing units located on a military installation, in government-controlled housing off the installation or civilian housing off the installation.

“We hope ArmyFCC.com will allow parents to view the program in a way they haven’t been able to do before,” said Marilyn Judge, director, Fort Sam Houston’s FCC. “Getting information out to the perspective parents is very helpful to us, parents and providers.”

A virtual tour of an FCC home offers parents, who may be reluctant to visit a series of homes in order to make a selection, pictures and information they need to know to make an important decision.

"It's making our referral process much more efficient," Judge added. "The providers will make their own updates from their home computers."

The Web site also allows the providers to tell, in their own words, what they do and what is important to them and gives each one an equal chance to impress prospective parents.

"It is an opportunity for us to showcase our homes and really introduce ourselves as independent businesses," said Shawn Lowery, an FCC childcare provider at Fort Sam Houston. "The program helps break the babysitter stereotype, moving us to a new category."

The secure section offers protection to both the providers and the parents so that only eligible parents can view provider information.

The Central Enrollment Registry staff at each installation will assist in the search process and can answer questions parents may have about individual FCC provider profiles. To make it a fair process for all families, parents must request childcare through the installation's CER office.

The officials said that, although ArmyFCC.com gives parents an advance start in selecting the best placement for their child, it does not guarantee a space in a specific home and parents should not use ArmyFCC.com as a substitute for the parent and provider interview.

As the number of temporary duty trips and deployments rises, the FCC program makes life easier for Soldiers and their diverse work hours by offering full-day, part-day and hourly care. FCC's special services include 24-hour and long-term care during mobilization and training exercises, evening and weekend care, and care for special needs children and mildly ill children.

In order to benefit from any CYS programs, to include FCC services, families must complete a registration

process and pay a registration fee, but it is not necessary to complete the registration process to place a child's name on the waiting list.

The installation Central Enrollment Registry office follows DoD, Army and installation policies for managing waiting lists. When a child's name comes to the top of the waiting list, a CYS registration clerk will contact the parent to offer the vacancy and provide information on the process of selecting a program or individual provider.



"I think it's great that the providers are getting this kind of support and attention," said Judge. "They put in long hours to provide childcare, and they are not as visible as an activity taking place in a facility. It gives them proper exposure."

Exercising voting rights important even in 'off' years

Soldiers and citizens overseas should participate in local off-season elections, the director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program said recently.

"I think it's always important for us to exercise our right to vote," Polli Brunelli said. "We've seen from past elections that our uniformed services members and overseas citizens vote in large numbers. They're engaged in the absentee-voting process, and some actually vote in person as well."

Just because this is not a presidential election year does not mean this election is not important, she added. Many elections will decide state and local issues.

Brunelli said it's important for absentee voters to look at all of the issues, state and local, which concern them in their state of legal voting residence. But it is up to each individual voter to decide what issues are impor-

tant and to research the candidates.

"[It's] a little bit easier than it used to be in the old days, where we found our overseas citizens were mostly getting information on elections from their friends and family members," Brunelli said. "They would either send them local newspapers or tell them what the candidates stood for and what the issues were."

The FVAP Web site — www.fvap.gov — provides multiple links to states' Web sites, state associations, political party sites, and other organizations where voters can find a plethora of information. News organizations can also be accessed via the Web, she said.

Voter-registration and absentee ballot-request forms are readily available as well.

Brunelli said it takes research to cast an effective vote. "It's incredibly important to be informed about these issues," she said. "An informed voter is a good voter. It shows civic responsibility in that regard when you're informed."

"The [Federal Post Card Application] is the easiest way to request registration and an absentee ballot," Brunelli said. "And the easiest way to get the form is from voting-assistance officers at military installations. And at overseas activities, local organizations provide them. Embassies and consulates also provide them. There are Democrats and Republicans abroad who are overseas citizens who stock these forms. And the forms are also available on our Web site, the Federal Voting Assistance Program's Web site."

Military members or other citizens overseas can contact their unit or installation voting-assistance officer, call the FVAP, or send an e-mail via the FVAP Web site.

Breast cancer awareness

As cells divide when new cells are not needed, they form too much tissue. The mass or lump of extra tissue, which is called a tumor, can be benign

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(non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

Finding a lump in your breast does not mean you have breast cancer. Early breast cancer does not usually cause pain, but as the cancer grows it can cause changes that women should be alert for. Seventy percent of all breast cancers are found through self-exams. Watch for:

- A change in the size or shape of the breasts.
- A discharge from the nipple.
- A change in the color or feel of the skin of the breast, areola or nipple (dimpled, puckered or scaly).
- A lump in or near breasts or underarm.
- Swelling, redness, or warmth that does not go away.
- Pain in one spot that does not vary with your monthly cycle.
- An itchy, sore, or scaling area on one nipple.

But remember: finding symptoms is not diagnostic of breast cancer! Consult your health-care provider.

Every two minutes in the United States, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. This year more than 200,000 new cases of breast cancer are expected in the U.S. Breast cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in women, exceeded only by lung cancer. It is the leading cause of death in women between the ages of 40 and 55.

And breast cancer is not just a female disease. Sixteen thousand men are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer this year and 400 are predicted to die.

Diagnosis may use any combination of the following:

1. Palpitation. A benign lump often feels different from cancerous ones.
2. Mammography provides information about a lump. Starting at the age of 40, women should have annual screening mammograms. Today, mammography has little radiation risk. A diagnostic mammogram is used to evaluate a woman with a problem/symptom or an abnormal finding on a screening mammogram, and will be focused on the area where there is thought to be abnormal tissue. Since a small percentage of breast cancers cannot be identified by mammography, it is important to practice regular BSE (breast self-exam).

3. Ultrasonography (ultrasound) uses high-frequency sound waves to show whether a lump is solid or filled with fluid.

4. Screening and early detection is best accomplished by mammograms, clinical breast exams (by doctor or nurse) or BSE. Based on these exams, the doctor may decide that no further tests are needed. Often, however, based on the finding, fluid or tissue must be removed from the breasts to make a diagnosis. Aspiration, or needle biopsy, is used to remove fluid or a small amount of tissue from a breast lump with a needle. Surgical biopsy is used by the surgeon to remove part or all of a lump, which will be examined by a pathologist.

Every woman should examine her breasts once a month to become familiar with how her breasts look and feel. The best time is about five to seven days after the beginning of her menstrual cycle. If she no longer has a cycle, she should choose a specific date each month; a date that is significant to her. Fibrocystic breast changes, lumpiness, and tenderness at certain times of the month do not increase your chance of getting cancer, but keep in mind — performing BSE will help a woman become familiar with what is normal for her breasts.

While the percentage of men who are diagnosed with breast cancer is small, men should also give themselves monthly exams and note changes to their physicians.

New information suggest that diets high in fruits and vegetables are linked with lower cancer rates, and eating at least five servings a day can help keep your daily calorie intake low. Just take it easy on the cheese sauce!

Editor's note: This article was written by Dorothy Lopez, who is a community health nurse at Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center, Fort Meade, Md.

Well-Being Liaison Office

The Well-Being Liaison Office would like to extend a warm welcome to its newest member — Cathy Jackman, who will serve as a Special Projects Officer for the WBLO.

Cathy is a senior Army spouse of 23 years, married to Maj. Gen. Galen Jackman, and the daughter of a retired Army

officer. The Jackmans have two sons — David 17, and Patrick 15.

Throughout her association with the Army, Cathy has volunteered her time working with a number of Army Family Readiness groups at varying levels. She has most recently volunteered as an Army Arlington Lady.

Cathy has a deep appreciation for Soldiers and their families and said that she is looking forward to working as a member of the WBLO team serving all seven Army Well-Being constituent groups.

While it brings us great joy to welcome a new member to our team, we are also sad to announce the departure of two other WBLO employees — Ayandria Barry and Sandra Floyd-Miller, both of whom work as staff on the Army Information Line as Constituent Liaisons.

Ayandria, or Yan as we've all become accustomed to calling her, has been a dedicated member of the WBLO Staff since August 2003. She is the proud wife of an Army first sergeant — 1st. Sgt. Melvin Barry, who serves with the 12th Aviation Battalion at Davidson Army Airfield, Va. — and a mother of two children — Melody, 14; and Gabriel, 4.

During her time with the WBLO, Yan has been completely dedicated to assisting Army families. She was also very instrumental in conducting a number of interviews with Soldiers as part of the Army's Disabled Soldier Support System (DS3) effort. All of us who've been privileged enough to work with Yan have come to see her as a fighter; having been diagnosed with breast cancer during her time here, she is now a survivor. With her departure from the WBLO staff, she will truly be missed. We wish her luck as she moved on to a position with the Army DS3 staff at Human Resources Command in Alexandria.

Sandra, retired Army master sergeant who joined the Army Information Line staff in September 2004 is also moving on to a position with the Army DS3 staff. Since joining the staff she has been very instrumental in supporting the Army's DS3 effort as well as providing assistance to Army Information Line callers. Married to Master Sgt. (Ret.) Dlanao Miller, and the mother of four children — Gregory, 23; Janell, 22; Icess, 17 and Janita 14 — Sandra will also be missed.

