



CENTENNIAL SALUTE - October 2005 Issue

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

Denver Centennial Chapter of the Association of the United States Army



AUSA opens with 'Call to duty'

Normally American founding fathers do not share the stage with modern-day Soldiers bathed in laser lights, but 230 years of Army history merged Oct. 3 for a few moments at the **Association of the United States Army** annual meeting at the Washington Convention Center.

The opening ceremony depicted that values fought for by citizen-Soldiers during the Revolution are the same ones Soldiers are battling for in Iraq and Afghanistan today.

Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey delivered a state of the Army address to the audience. He described how the Army is extremely busy during the fourth year of the war on terror.

"Soldiers from every corner of this country are serving 'we the people,'" he said. "Because of that service, the Army will remain the pre-eminent land force in the world."

Harvey went on to mention how Soldiers are not only fighting terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq, but are helping to institute democracy and free elections in both nations.

"For 230 years our nation has thrived because citizens have always answered the call to duty," Harvey said before reciting some of the calls to duty citizens have answered since the Revolution: the Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Harvey also lauded the first responders to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the families who support Soldiers.

Then he said the Army, even though it has performed admirably in the past, has to change to continue to be as effective in the 21st century against new threats.

Harvey outlined how the Army is transforming, modernizing and growing. He said the Army has 315,000 operational (combat) troops now and that number will increase by some 40,000 to 355,000 by 2007.

The modernization and growth of the Army will be made possible by new and more efficient business practices, he said.

Retired Gen. Gordon Sullivan, president of **AUSA**, told the large crowd how his organization is "proud to provide support for American Soldiers." (Source: *Army News Service, Dennis Ryan*)

http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/read.php?story_id_key=8010

Denver Centennial Chapter AUSA Joins with Mile High Chapter NDIA

Luncheon Meeting
DoubleTree Hotel, Iliff & I-225

11:30-13:00, Wednesday, 16 November 2005

Guest Speaker: Col Dave Tobin

Operations Group Commander, Buckley AFB, CO

Cost: \$20 – RSVP NLT 10 November

Jim Kumpost, james.kumpost@us.army.mil, 720 842-4587

Army Reserve to activate ARMEDCOM

The largest medical command in the Army will activate Oct. 16 in a ceremony at the Army Reserve Center in Pinellas Park, Fla.

The new Army Reserve Medical Command, also called ARMEDCOM, will command and control about 28,000 Soldiers assigned to more than 250 units across the United States and Puerto Rico. Most of these medical units will transfer to ARMEDCOM from other regional readiness commands.

The new command's primary mission is to centrally manage the administration, training, and alignment of Army Reserve Soldiers in the medical field, officials said. (Source: *Army News Service. Information provided by U.S. Army Reserve Medical Command.*)

http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/print.php?story_id_key=8056

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Army National Guard Rolls Out New Modular Unit Designations

The National Guard Bureau formally announced the designations of the new modular brigades that will be the basis for the transformed Army National Guard.

The announcement comes in conjunction with an announcement by the Army's Chief of Military History at the **Association of the U.S. Army** convention in Washington, D.C., that lays down the new modular structure for all components of the Army.

Seventy-three percent of Army National Guard units are affected by transformation – the largest shift in Guard force structure since the end of World War II.

At the core of the Army National Guard's force will be 34 modular "Brigade Combat Teams" that are identical in structure and manning to their active Army counterparts.

Complementing the BCTs are a number of new modular supporting units – six "Fires Brigades," 10 "Combat Support Brigades (Maneuver Enhancement)," 11 Sustainment Brigades, 12 Aviation Brigades, an Aviation Command and three Sustainment Commands.

A major issue throughout the transformation to modular units was the desire to retain the lineage and honors of historic Army Guard regiments and battalions. In many cases, effected states, NGB, and the U.S. Army Center of Military History jointly decided to convert historic regiments to a new branch in order to keep their lineage intact.

One of the most visible effects of transformation will be the number of new shoulder sleeve insignia (unit patches) that Army Guard soldiers will be wearing.

The eight existing Army Guard divisions will all continue under the new modular force structure as deployable command and control headquarters. In peacetime, each division headquarters will have training and oversight responsibilities for four or five Guard BCTs. In wartime, each headquarters will have a variable number of BCTs and support units attached to it depending on its mission.

For more information, you can view a Powerpoint presentation that shows all the new units.

http://www.ngb.army.mil/news/2005/10/ARNG_Modular_Designations-V9_9_23_05_CSA_names.ppt. Source: <http://www.ngb.army.mil/news/story.asp?id=1974>

Army Education Plus enlistment option helps recruits earn GEDs

The Army is expanding its eligibility criteria to include people who want to serve in uniform but don't have a high-school diploma.

Called the Education Plus Program enlistment option, the expanded criteria means the Army will help

qualified non-prior-service recruits obtain a GED so they can enlist in the active Army or Army Reserve.

The program pays for the cost of basic GED training and the test at an approved location. To be eligible, a person must:

Have been withdrawn from high school for at least six months;

Meet their state's minimum age requirements for GED testing; and

Achieve a qualifying score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test.

Recruiters will direct eligible recruits to approved GED programs in their area. Applicants must pass the GED test to complete the enlistment process and report to initial-entry training. (Source: *TRADOC News Service*)

Task Force Baghdad rings up 4,000 re-ups for FY05

Soldiers assigned to Task Force Baghdad are answering their nation's call to "stay Army" by ending Fiscal Year 2005 with more than 4,000 re-enlistments.

In return for their continued service, they're also earning a combined total of more than \$42 million in tax-free re-enlistment bonuses.

"All re-enlistment goals set by the Department of the Army for FY05 have been met with overwhelming success," said Sgt. Maj. Craig T. Lott, Multi-National Division-Baghdad retention sergeant major, and a member of Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

End-of-year calculations show re-enlistment success in all three major categories of service members. Re-enlistments of initial-term Soldiers (those with less than six years in service) were at 127 percent of the targeted goal; mid-career Soldiers (six to 10 years) were at 134 percent; and career Soldiers (more than 10 years) were at 165 percent.

Master Sgt. Harl A. Marzan, senior retention career counselor from STB, said in the past eight months the National Guard component alone has re-enlisted more than 145 Soldiers who have received nearly \$2 million in tax-free bonuses.

Marzan said although the Army National Guard will probably not meet its recruiting goal for FY05, the retention re-enlistments have been very successful.

Remarkably, most of the re-enlistment achievements of FY05 have been met in the last nine months. Many of the Soldiers were preoccupied with preparations for the deployment to Iraq during the beginning of the fiscal year.

"At first the mission seemed unattainable, but a lot of hard work and the bonus amounts have helped out," said Sgt. 1st Class Matt J. Wickham, 3rd Inf. Div. retention operations non-commissioned officer-in-charge. (Source: *Army News Service, Spc. Maria Mengrone, Task Force Baghdad PAO*)

http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/print.php?story_id_key=8054

Army changes PLDC to Warrior Leader Course

The Army has announced that its Primary Leadership Development Course will be renamed the Warrior Leader Course, beginning Oct. 15, and officials said the new name reflects changes made to PLDC curriculum over the past year.

The course has been redesigned to better prepare Soldiers for asymmetrical warfare and now includes lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, said Brig. Gen. James M. Milano, the Army's director of Training under G3.

"The new WLC will not only prepare Soldiers for traditional challenges, but irregular challenges as well," Milano said.

"We are a nation at war. We have taken the lessons learned from our deployments and incorporated them into our revised leadership course," said Col. David Abramowitz, commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, which played a major role in redesigning the PLDC curriculum.

"These changes add rigor and relevance to the course and improve leadership skills and confidence in our junior leaders," Abramowitz said. "The course is revolutionary and warrants a name change."

Warrior Leader Course is the right name for the new course, Abramowitz said, because it "espouses the tenets of the Warrior Ethos."

PLDC used an instructor-centered, exposure, and feedback system. A short Field Training Exercise was the practical exercise used to evaluate combat leader skills.

The FTX, though, lacked standardization throughout the Army, said retired Sgt. Maj. Ron Schexnayder of the G3 Leader Development Division. He said a different approach was needed to produce a competent, innovative, adaptive and agile combat leader required by the current operational environment.

The modular force structure and contemporary operational environment relies heavily on small-unit tactics. The demands of today's battlefield require leaders who can think independently, Schexnayder said.

The Warrior Leader Course is designed to provide the Army with NCOs who can visualize, describe, and execute squad-level operations in varied operational environments, Schexnayder said.

"The WLC places the responsibility of training individual Soldier skills back on the junior leader," said Command Sgt. Maj. James E. Dale of the Sergeants Major Academy. "This course prepares him/her to assume that role." (Source: *Army News Service. Information provided by G3 Leader Development Division.*)

http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/print.php?story_id_key=8045



VA Secretary Announces "Fulfilling the Commitment" Initiative

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a new initiative called *Fulfilling the Commitment – Coming Home to Work* to help veterans make the transition from military service to civilian life.

"All Americans can be grateful for the service and sacrifice of the men and women of our armed forces," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "The VA is committed to assisting these young heroes in the transition from military life to the civilian work force through a wide-ranging array of programs."

Fulfilling the Commitment – Coming Home to Work is an umbrella initiative, a comprehensive intergovernmental and public-private alliance that will ensure separating Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans that they will have employment opportunities when they return home from the war on terrorism.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in the first three quarters of 2005, almost 15 percent of veterans in the 20-24 year-old age group were unemployed, nearly three times the national rate.

Some 200,000 service members separate from active military service annually. This initiative will combine the efforts of federal, state and private sector entities to address their employment needs.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/PressArtInternet.cfm?id=1036>

VA and Goodwill Sign Training and Employment Pact

In participation with President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative Program, officials from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Goodwill Industries International Inc. recently signed an agreement that will increase opportunities for vocational training and employment-related assistance for service-connected disabled veterans.

"Both VA and Goodwill are committed to providing these brave men and women with opportunities to seek career advancement, job mobility, greater financial security, and economic well-being for their families," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The agreement builds on the achievements of VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, which assists veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find, and keep suitable employment.

For more information about the agreement and this program, go to <http://www.vetsuccess.gov/>. Information on VA's Faith Based Community Initiative Program can be found at <http://www.va.gov/opa/fbci>. (Source: *VANEWS-L@WWW.LISTSERV.VA.GOV*)

VA Announces New Survivor Benefits Web Site

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has created a new Internet Web site for the surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died on active duty and for the survivors and dependents of veterans who died after leaving the military.

The Web site is organized into two broad categories - death in service and death after service. It provides visitors with information about a wide range of benefits for the surviving spouse, dependent children, and dependent parents of deceased veterans and active-duty personnel.

The site also has information from -- and links to -- other federal agencies and organizations that offer benefits and services to survivors and dependents.

The website can be found at <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors>. (Source: *VA Media Relations*)

Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit

Starting January 1, 2006, the new Medicare prescription drug coverage becomes available to everyone with Medicare, including TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries.

For nearly all TRICARE-Medicare beneficiaries, under most circumstances, there is no added value in purchasing Medicare prescription drug coverage if you have TRICARE. The exception to this general rule may be for those with limited incomes and assets who qualify for Medicare's extra help with prescription drug plan costs; such individuals may benefit by enrolling in a Medicare prescription drug plan.

TRICARE-Medicare eligible beneficiaries, entitled to the TRICARE Pharmacy benefit, need to consider a number of factors when deciding whether or not to enroll in a Medicare drug plan. They should consider monthly premiums, deductibles, co-pays and drug coverage under the different prescription drug plan options offered (also known as a formulary), including the TRICARE Pharmacy Program. The Medicare Part D drug plan options will vary by location.

You may qualify for assistance from the Social Security Administration (SSA) paying the Medicare Part D premiums, deductibles and co-pays if you have limited income and limited resources. If you think you may qualify for Medicare's extra help, you may apply for it and still keep your TRICARE pharmacy coverage.

People with Medicare can enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan during the initial open enrollment period (November 15, 2005-May 15, 2006). If you don't enroll during this initial period, each following year, you may enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan between November 15th and December 31st.

For more information on Medicare Part D, visit the Medicare Web sites at www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships or www.medicare.gov or call its 24-hour toll-free number at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-888-633-4227). (Source: *Patient Administration Systems and Biostatistics Activity (PASBA) Mailing List*)

DoD Announces One-Year Open Enrollment for SBP

The Department of Defense announced recently that military retirees, who opted out of some or all their Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage, will have another opportunity to elect coverage during a one-year open enrollment period from Oct. 1, 2005 through Sept. 30, 2006.

Upon a retiree's death, SBP provides an annuity of up to 55 percent of the military retired pay. Until recently, the annuity for a surviving spouse age 62 or older was reduced to 35 percent to reflect the availability of Social Security benefits. This reduction will phase out by April 2008, and the full 55 percent benefit will be paid regardless of the spouse's age in accordance with the Fiscal 2005 National Defense Authorization Act.

Current non-participants will be able to elect any coverage they could have elected previously upon retiring from active service or upon receiving notification of eligibility for reserve retired pay at age 60.

If they have a reduced election, they may increase their coverage. A participant with child only coverage may add a spouse or former spouse to their coverage, and a member may add child coverage to spouse or former spouse coverage.

But those who took SBP coverage and later elected to terminate that coverage are not eligible to make an open enrollment election.

Elections are effective the first day of the month after the election is received, but no earlier than Oct. 1, 2005. An election is void if the retiree dies in the two years following an election and all premiums are refunded to the designated survivor.

To make an open enrollment election, a retiree must complete and submit a DD Form 2656-9, "Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) Open Enrollment Election." The form is available electronically at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2656-9.pdf>

For assistance with the form, members should contact the retiree activities office for their service.

Mail the completed form to the address specified on the form.

Applicants will be formally notified of their cost and have 30 days from the date of the notice to cancel the election by notifying the Defense Finance and Accounting Service or the reserve component, as applicable, in writing.

SGLI and VGLI Permanently Increased to \$400,000

Signed by President on September 30, H.R. 3200 (Public Law No: 109-80), as amended, will allow for the maximum coverage for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) to be permanently increased to \$400,000.

Affecting only SGLI, the bill also requires the Pentagon to notify the servicemember's spouse in writing if the servicemember declines SGLI coverage or chooses an amount less than the maximum. The military also must notify a spouse should someone other than the spouse or child be designated as the policyholder's beneficiary.

The new maximums will be effective retroactive to September 1, 2005. The coverage of all policies in force, regardless of coverage amount, would immediately be changed to the maximum \$400,000. Policyholders would then have the opportunity to decrease coverage if they choose.

Access DD-214 On-Line: eVetRecs

Military personnel records can be used for proving military service, or as a valuable tool in genealogical research. Most veterans and their next-of-kin can obtain free copies of their DD Form 214 (Report of Separation) and other military and medical records using eVetRecs <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/>.

Retirees Authorized Limited use of Dining Facility

Retirees are now authorized to eat dinner and midnight meals at the High Frontier Dining Facility Monday through Friday only. The privilege is offered on a pay-as-you-go basis and is on a trial basis through Oct. 30. For more information call 720-847-6181. (Source: Mile High Guardian, Buckley AFB, CO)

Retirees can give to CFC

Federal, postal and military retirees interested in donating to one or more of the 1,900 charities served by the Denver Combined Federal Campaign may call 303-561-2389 or visit www.cfcmetrodenver.org. (Source: Mile High Guardian, Buckley AFB, CO)

Reflections on Armistice Day

A Veterans Day ceremony is slated for 11 a.m. Nov. 11 at Crown Hill Cemetery, 7777 W. 29th Ave. in Wheat Ridge. All veterans are invited to attend the event featuring guest speaker, Col. William "Robby" Robinson, Deputy Director of the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Centennial State Pipes and Drum band. For more information, call Olinger Crown Hill Cemetery at 303-233-4611 or visit www.crownhillfuneral.com. (Source: Mile High Guardian, Buckley AFB, CO)

Army Echoes

<http://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/echoes.asp>

Write Your Senator

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

Write Your Representative

This service will assist you by identifying your Congressperson in the U.S. House of Representatives and providing contact information.

<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

Buckley AFB Retiree Activities Office

460th Space Wing, Bldg 606, Room 140
18401 East A-Basin Avenue Stop 88
Buckley AFB, CO 80011

Telephone: 720-847-6693

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday - 0900 – 1500

<http://www.buckley.af.mil/retirees.htm>



The Association of the United States Army (AUSA)

A private, non-profit educational organization that supports America's Army - Active, National Guard, Reserve, Civilians, Retirees and family members.

AUSA offers three types of membership.


--**Individual**- Current and retired Army and reserve component soldiers, cadets, government civilians, Army family members, concerned citizens

--**Corporate**- Companies that support Army communities

--**Sustaining**- Defense industry businesses


<http://www.ausa.org/webpub/DeptMarketing.nsf/byid/DeptMarketing.nsfhome>

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SPECIAL NOTE OF APPRECIATION: The *Denver Centennial Chapter* of the *Association of the United States Army* thanks **Steve Ferency**, Senior Sales Manager, **Renaissance Denver Hotel** for printing this Newsletter for distribution to our membership.



Army Recruiting – You Can Help!

Army recruiters work hard to find young men and women who are willing to answer the Call to Duty and serve their nation as Soldiers in the U.S. Army, but they need help. You can assist in the recruiting effort by spreading the Army message to community leaders, civic groups and educators.

“The 6th Battalion, USAREC, which is responsible for recruiting efforts in Colorado and several surrounding states, has asked the AUSA Denver Centennial Chapter’s help in recruiting. Specifically, the Battalion asked if it might be allowed to contact certain members of our Chapter as points of reference for young people interested in joining the All Volunteer Force. As it turns out, many parents of potential recruits have no familiarity with the U.S. Army, and tend to be somewhat negative in their influence on recruiting simply because it is something that they know little or nothing about.

“You can help in our Country’s efforts to win the War on Terror by helping the U.S. Army Recruiting Command meet its mission. This you can do by simply answering questions that potential recruits have about the Army.

“It is unlikely that most of our members will be asked for help, but those who are asked and are able to help out can make a significant difference.

“Please let me know if you ARE NOT willing to have your name and contact information released to the 6th Battalion for this purpose.”

Thank you, Sam Thiessen
Denver Centennial Chapter President

A speaker’s kit designed to inform, motivate and generate interest in America’s Army can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/apa/speakers.htm>. (An interactive CD version of the kit was distributed at the **AUSA** annual meeting in early October. It includes the presentation above, as well as the current Army commercials, basic combat training Webisodes and the 16-minute video, "The Way of the Soldier.")



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EVENTS

November 16, 2005

AUSA joins NDIA for a Luncheon Meeting
DoubleTree Hotel, Iliff & I-225

AUSA: Voice for the Army – Support for the Soldier