



Family Deployment Supplement to the Connecticut Guardian

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Last few Air Control families meet with commander over 'home cooked' meal

MAJ. GEORGE H. WORRALL III
103RD FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

At the start of the Columbus Day weekend, families of Connecticut's Air Control Squadron airmen came to the Orange ANG station headquarters building to talk about their loved ones who are deployed to Afghanistan.

"I am a little worried, but I know he is there to do his job and we are praying for him," said Cookie, sister of Master Sgt. Michael McClary, 103rd Air Control Squadron. "We just want him to come home soon."

After family members braved holiday weekend Route 95 traffic, they shared a potluck dinner and watched the video messages from the last potluck dinner.

Then, allaying some of the family worries the commander spoke about the security situation at the Afghan base, from which he recently returned.

"Rest assured your loved ones are very safe," said Lt. Col. Richard D. Erdmann, commander, 103rd Air Control Squadron. "There is a multi-national security system over there with Romanians, special forces and the 10th Mountain Division from New York."

The biggest question of course was when they will come home.

"We are hoping the rotation ends the first week of December," said Erdmann, who also explained that it may take another week after they depart Afghanistan to reach Connecticut due to airlift issues.

After the commander spoke, family members separated into small groups based on whether they were a spouse, parent and so on to discuss the deployment's impact on the family, and share some experiences.

"It has been an adventure, that is for sure," said Keri, whose has been married one and a half years to Tech. Sgt. Mark Blanda, 103rd Air Control Squadron, before talking issues with the only other spouse in attendance.

One highlight seemed to be the lack of issues around communication.

"I think I talk to him more now since he has been gone," said Deb about her son, Senior Airman Ryan Ahrens, 103rd Air Control Squadron. "At home he often just goes to his room and does not say anything, now he seeks me out. It's nice to keep in touch."

Certainly there are more means of communication than in the past with email, calling cards and off-netting through the base; but, some of the success has to be credited to the proactive work of family support.

"We try to call the family contact three times a month just to see how everything is going," said retired Senior Master Sgt. Charles Solomon, who works as a family coordinator in Orange. "When families have

told us they are not hearing from the member we contact the (deployed) base and encourage the member to call or email."

There was no lack of pride in what the members are doing, either from the unit, or the families.

"They do an extremely important job and they do it very well," said Erdmann. "So you can be very proud of them each and every day they are over there."

As families enjoy their food at the dinner, Lt. Col. Richard D. Erdmann (standing at left), commander, 103rd Air Control Squadron, moves from table to table to meet each family. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW/PA)



Master Sgt. Michael A. McClary's family enjoys dinner at the Pot Luck Dinner October 10. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW/PA)

Family program offers special events

Yankee Candle & Bright Nights Bus Trip

Join us on a trip to the Yankee Candle factory in South Deerfield, Massachusetts and then tour the Holiday Spectacular Bright Nights at Forest Park. Take this opportunity to stock up on those last minute Christmas gifts or just splurge on yourself. The bus will be departing Bradley ANG Base at 9:15 a.m. and return approximately 7 p.m. on December 20, 2003. The cost is \$3.00 per person. Anyone interested in joining us, please contact Donna Rivera at (860) 292-2730 or Lisa Hanks at 292-2574. The deadline to sign up is 14 December 2003.

Multi Cultural Dancing

On the third Saturday of every month, dance lessons will be available for Connecticut National Guardsmen and their families. The next class is scheduled for December 20, 2003. The cost is be \$5 per person or \$15 for a family of four or more. All ages are welcome. On sight childcare is available. A variety of dance lessons will be offered, including, but not limited to, Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Hip Hop, Ballroom, Swing, and Flamenco. The classes will be held at the East Hartford Community Center, from 7 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. There will be two lessons scheduled at each class, with free time to practice what you have learned. The first lessons will be Salsa and Merengue. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

For details please call the Family program office at 1-800-992-6056 options 7, 2, 1 or 860-292-2730 or 860-883-6936.

This is a great opportunity to meet and have fun. If you do not want to dance, but would like to join us anyway, please do, there is plenty of room to sit and enjoy yourself while watching us learn to DANCE!!

Handyperson Hotline for families and volunteers

Calling all soldiers and airmen, retirees or spouses. This is your opportunity to stop being a spectator and start doing something to help the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard during these unprecedented times.

Volunteer to donate some of your time and expertise to the CTNG Family Program's Handyperson Center. If you are a tradesman or an all around handyperson or a laborer, the Handyperson Center is looking for you!

E-mail your name, phone number skill, status (active, retired, spouse) and hometown to Sgt. Maj. Toby Cormier at toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil or call (860) 209-0770.

The Handyperson Hotline is designed to reduce the stressors on the families of deployed soldiers and airmen by having everyday household problems diagnosed and repaired or referred to competent businesses at no cost for labor.

The program is also designed to get seasonal chores such as window air conditioners installed/removed, pools

opened/closed, leaves removed, items brought to the dump and so on.

All of this can be performed by fellow Guardsmen, retirees or spouses of Guardsmen who are willing to donate their time and expertise to this program.

Here's how the program works:

A deployed family member calls the Handyperson Hotline with a clogged drain.

The Hotline manager contacts a plumber from the Handyperson Database who will contact the family member and attempt to walk the person through correcting the problem (if possible.)

If not corrected, the Hotline will dispatch a qualified person (fellow Guardsman) to the house to correct the problem.

It is designed to give the deployed family somewhere to turn to keep the home operating smoothly without having to pay to get things done around the house that were normally done by the deployed soldier or airman.

To volunteer or for more information, call (860) 209-0770 today.

Tax relief aids military, families

K.L. VANTRAN
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Legislation signed by President George W. Bush on Nov. 11 increases the death gratuity payment to \$12,000 and provides that the full payment is tax-free.

That portion of the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 is retroactive to Sept. 10, 2001, to provide for servicemembers who died in the terrorist attacks the following day and in the ongoing global war on terror, said Army Lt. Col. Janet Fenton. She is the director of the Armed Forces Tax Council.

"If you are killed on active duty, regardless of whether you're in theater, or in a training accident or die from disease, your family receives \$12,000 death gratuity that is not taxed," she said.

"And that's a big change. In addition, any future increases to the death gratuity will remain tax-free."

The death gratuity has been \$6,000 since 1991, with half of it being taxed, she said.

"It just didn't seem to be fair for the military family who was left grieving for their servicemember to get hit with a tax bill," Fenton said.

Capital-gain exclusion for home sales is one of the most common areas people were looking for tax relief in, Fenton said.

"This act will allow members to suspend the period of time which they have to sell their home and take the tax exclusion so they won't have to pay that capital gains," she said.

"It's retroactive to 1997 so military members who have sold their homes since 1997 have one year from Nov. 11, 2003, to request a refund for any tax they did pay."

Since 1997, when the law was previously changed, if servicemembers who owned a home got reassigned more than 50 miles from that home or was ordered to move on post, they were no longer able to roll over the gain from that sale to the next home they purchased.

Also since 1997, individuals could exclude up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for married couples) of gain from the sale of a home if they resided in it for two of the five years preceding the sale.

Under this act, military and foreign service people can suspend (for up to 10 years) the time transferred away from home on official extended duty for purposes of applying the five-year portion of the two-out-of-five-year rule.

The 2003 act also includes above-the-line deduction for overnight travel expenses of military reservists and National Guardsmen who have to travel more than 100 miles to attend drills or meetings.

"The act allows for an above-the-line, which means you don't have to itemize your taxes to take advantage of this deduction," Fenton said.

"(Servicemembers will) be able to deduct unreimbursed travel expenses such as lodging, 50 percent of meals and any transportation costs." This part of the act is retroactive to Jan. 1.

When the tax code changed in 1986, it allowed any military benefit existing in September 1986 to remain tax-free, Fenton said. However, it was always unclear whether military child care was included in that, she added.

"This act merely makes it clear that those provisions of child care were intended to be tax-free to military members," she said.

The tax act also provides for extra tax-filing time for servicemembers serving in contingency operations.

The internal revenue code allows servicemembers who are serving in combat zones or hazardous-duty areas to have an extension of time — usually 180 days from the time the person leaves the combat zone — to file taxes.

"A lot of military operations don't rise to the level of being declared by the president as 'combat,'" Fenton said.

"But there are several contingency operations where servicemembers are outside the continental United States."

The act also includes modifying eligibility criteria of tax-exempt veterans organizations; tax-free treatment of homeowners' assistance program payments; suspension of tax-exempt status for designated terrorist organizations; and extension of victims' tax relief to astronauts who die on space missions.



HANDYPERSON HOTLINE





'CARRYING THE HOMEFRONT'

**SERGEANT MAJOR
TOBY P. CORMIER**
Ph: 860-441-2984
Cell: 860-209-0770
toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil

Reserve and Guard receive unlimited commissary benefits

The Department of Defense announced last month that with the president's signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, effective immediately, the following members and their dependents will be permitted unlimited access to commissary stores:

* Members of the Ready Reserve (which includes members of the Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard) and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a Uniformed Services Identification Card.

* Former members eligible for retired pay at age 60 but who have not yet attained the age of 60 and who possess a Department of Defense Civilian Identification Card.

* Dependents of the members described above who have a Uniformed Services Identification Card or who have a distinct identification card used as an authorization card for benefits and privileges administered by the Uniformed Services.

"Instructions have gone out to all continental U.S. stores informing them that reservists now have unlimited shopping and telling store managers how to welcome members of the National Guard and Reserve to the full use of the commissary benefit," said Patrick Nixon, deputy director of the Defense Commissary Agency.

"Commissary shoppers will begin to see banners saying 'Welcome Guard and Reserve to Full Time Savings,' along with other events recognizing these new full-time shoppers."

Guard and Reserve members were authorized only 24 commissary shopping

days per calendar year until today when the president signed the National Defense Authorization Act, which contained provisions eliminating the restrictions. Commissaries have immediately adopted the new provisions, which means Guard and Reserve members will no longer have to present a Commissary Privilege Card when they shop.

"I want to thank Congress and the Department of Defense for their efforts in bringing the commissary shopping privilege to the total force," said Patrick Nixon, deputy director of the Defense Commissary Agency.

"The Congress included unlimited commissary benefits in the National Defense Authorization Act thus making full time shopping possible for the men and women who serve their nation in the National Guard and Reserve."

Nixon noted that special thanks should go to Charles Abell, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

Abell acted decisively and immediately in providing interim authority for the Reserve component to have full-time commissary shopping just in time to take advantage of holiday savings.

For more information about the Defense Commissary Agency, see their Web site at <http://www.commissaries.com/> [<http://www.commissaries.com/>].



For the Kids

Pearl Harbor Day is Dec. 7 and the following quiz is a great way for children, and adults, to test their knowledge of American history. The answers can be found on the National Park Service website at the link below. Good Luck!

Minihunt #29 (Searching)

Go to www.nps.gov/usar/. Give entire answers to complete the blanks below.

- The USS Arizona Memorial straddles the sunken hull of the battleship and commemorates the December 7, ____, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.
- The Memorial was dedicated in 1962, and became a National Park Service area in ____.
- The attack on Pearl Harbor was the culmination of a decade of deteriorating relations between Japan and the United States over the status of China and the security of ____.
- The principal architect of the attack was admiral ____, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet. Though personally opposed to war with America, ____ knew that Japan's only hope of success in such a war was to achieve quick and decisive victory.
- By early morning, December 7, 1941, the Japanese attack fleet of 33 warships and auxiliary craft, including six aircraft carriers, had reached their launch position, 230 miles north of Oahu. At ____ am, the first wave of fighters, bombers, and torpedo planes took off. The night before, some 10 miles outside the entrance to Pearl Harbor, ____ midget submarines carrying two crewmen and two torpedoes each were launched from larger "mother" subs. Their mission: enter Pearl Harbor before the air strike, remain submerged until the attack got underway, then cause as much damage as possible.
- At ____ am, the crew of the destroyer USS Ward spotted the conning tower of one of the midget subs headed for the entrance to Pearl Harbor. The Ward sank the sub with depth charges and gunfire, then radioed the information to headquarters.
- Before ____ am, the radar station at Opana Point picked up a signal indicating a large flight of planes approaching from the north. These were thought to be either aircraft flying in from the carrier USS Enterprise or an anticipated flight of B-17s from the mainland, so no action was taken.
- The first wave of Japanese aircraft arrived over their target areas shortly before ____ am. Their leader, Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, sent the coded messages "To, To, To" and "____" telling the fleet that the attack had begun and that complete surprise had been achieved.
- At approximately ____ am, the USS Arizona exploded, having been hit by a 1,760 pound armor-piercing bomb that slammed through her deck and ignited her forward ammunition magazine. In less than nine minutes, she sank with ____ of her crew, a total loss.
- All U.S. Ship except ____, ____, and ____ were salvaged and later saw action.

COMMISSARY & EXCHANGE DIRECTORY

Here is a current directory of area commissaries and exchanges along with their phone numbers. Always call ahead to verify hours as they may change without notice. A valid i.d. card is necessary to use these facilities. Contact your unit administrator if you or your dependants need a card. If you have trouble, contact the State Family Program Office at 1-800-858-2677.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD

East Granby
TUESDAY – FRIDAY:
10:00 – 5:00
SATURDAY: 10:00 – 4:00
SUNDAY & MONDAY: Closed
UTAs: Open Saturday &
Sunday: 10:00 – 5:00
Phone: (860) 653-6994

COAST GUARD ACADEMY

New London
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
9:00 – 5:00
SATURDAY: 9:00 – 3:00
SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (860) 444-8488

CAMP ROWLAND POST

EXCHANGE
MONDAY: Closed
TUESDAY – SATURDAY:
10:00 – 5:00
SUNDAY: 10:00 – 4:00
Phone: (860) 739-9672

COAST GUARD STATION

120 Woodward Avenue
New Haven, CT
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
9:00 – 4:30
SATURDAY: 9:00 – 2:00
SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (203) 468-2712

WEST POINT, NEW YORK

Exchange Hours:
SATURDAY – WEDNESDAY:
10:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY & FRIDAY:
10:00 – 7:00
Phone: (914) 446-5406
Commissary Hours:
MONDAY: Closed
TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY:
10:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY: 10:00 – 7:00
FRIDAY: 10:00 – 6:00
SATURDAY: 9:00 – 5:00
SUNDAY: 11:00 – 5:00
Phone: (914) 446-5406

SUB BASE, NEW LONDON

Exchange Hours:
MON., TUES., WED.,
FRI.: 9:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY: 9:00 – 7:00
SATURDAY & SUNDAY:
9:00 – 5:00
HOLIDAYS: 9:00 – 4:00
Phone: (860) 694-3811
Commissary Hours:
MONDAY: Closed
TUE., WED. & FRI.: 9:00 – 6:00
THURSDAY: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
SATURDAY: 8:00 – 5:00
SUNDAY: 10:00 – 5:00
Phone: (860) 694-2244

WESTOVER AIR FORCE BASE

Chicopee, Mass.
MONDAY – FRIDAY: 10:00 – 5:00
SATURDAY: 10:00 – 5:00
SUNDAY: 11:00 – 5:00
Phone: (413) 593-5583

ARMY RESERVE CENTER

700 South Quaker Lane
West Hartford, CT
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
10:00 – 1:00 p.m.
MONDAY – FRIDAY:
1:45 – 5:00 p.m.
SATURDAY & SUNDAY: Closed
Phone: (860) 236-3393

TEMPORARILY CLOSED

Family Assistance Center locations

Family Assistance Centers are set-up in the following armories around the state:

Bristol Armory
61 Center Street, Bristol, CT 06010
(860) 582-1206 Toll Free 866-347-2283 1st Lt. Lynda Hedenberg

Waterbury Armory
64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702
(203) 574-2406 Toll Free 866-347-2291 Sgt. Jonathon Duffy

Manchester Armory
330 Main Street, Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 646-0780 Toll Free 866-347-2286 Capt. Lauri Tinelle

Windsor Locks, AASF
Bradley International ARPT-BLDG 85-152, Route 75, Windsor Locks, CT 06096
(860) 627-7942 Toll Free 866-347-2292

Groton - AVCRAD
71 Tower Avenue, Groton, CT 06340
(860) 448-3346 Toll Free 866-347-3346 Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Ives

103rd FW, Bradley ANG Base
Bldg 8, East Granby, CT 06026
(860) 292-2730 Mrs. Donna Rivera

Newington SASC
555 Willard Avenue, Building 2W, Newington, CT 06111
(860) 878-6723 (860) 878-6724 Toll Free 800-858-2677
Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Spec. Jessica McKenna and Staff Sgt. Christopher McCarty

Branford Armory
87 Montowese Street, Branford, CT 06405
(203) 481-3874 Toll Free 866-347-3351 Sgt. 1st Class Cheryl Gilbert

Stratford Armory
63 Armory Road, Stratford, CT 06614
(203) 375-8269 Toll Free 866-347-3356 Spec. Tamara Jex

Middletown Armory
200 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 344-9201 Toll Free 866-347-3355 Ms. Michelle McIntosh

Norwich Armory
38 Stott Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360
(860) 887-3911 Toll Free 866-347-3357

103rd Air Control Squadron
206 Boston Post Road, orange, CT 06477
(203) 795-2983 Charlie and Jane Solomon

Volunteers are needed in each facility.
Those wishing to help out can contact Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Family Program Manager at 1-800-858-2677.

Any family member or loved one of a deployed soldier who has questions about benefits or deployment issues may also get answers to their question at the following email addresses: kim.hoffman@ct.ngb.army.mil or julian.muller@ct.ngb.army.mil

My Father's in the Army

Lauren Rosati
Daughter of Staff Sgt. David Rosati
143rd MP Co.

My Father's in the Army, he goes
away sometimes
once he went to Bosnia and worried
about land mines
he's also been to Germany and
stayed there for three years
now he's in Iraq, thinking about it
brings me tears
he should be coming home soon, a
couple of months, no more
but when your father is in a place of
war, each day seems like eleven
more
but I'm going to keep him in my
heart and think about him every
day
and then maybe it will seem that
he's not so far away



Lauren Rosati and her Soldier, her dad, Staff Sgt. David Rosati, 143rd MP Co. (Photo courtesy of the Rosati family)

Kids' Creative Corner

A MONTHLY FEATURE
OF FUN AND
EDUCATIONAL
ACTIVITIES

This month's Creative Corner is a special submission from the daughter of a deployed Soldier. If you are the son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter or other young relative of a deployed Soldier or Airman, please send us your artwork or poetry, along with a photo, so we can share it with all our troops overseas. Email to CTGUARDIAN@ct.ngb.army.mil or by postal mail to Editor: Connecticut Guardian, Public Affairs Office, National Guard Armory, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795