



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Weekly News for National Guard Families

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<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>

Civilian Employment Information (CEI) Program Registration for Army and Air National Guard, Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserve

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/esgr/index.jsp> (Note to those viewing this page in Word or PDF format: You may have to copy this address and paste it into your browser's address window.)

Cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve who are currently on active duty

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2004/d20040331ngr1.pdf>

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) contains links and information about schooling, distance education, scholarships, and organizations devoted to the military family

<http://www.militarychild.org/index.cfm>

Militarystudent.org is a website that helps military children with transition and deployment issues. It has some great features for kids, parents, special needs families, school educators, and more—even safe chat rooms for kids.

<http://www.militarystudent.org>

Disabled Soldiers Initiative (DS3)

This website provides information on the new DS3 program. Through DS3, the Army provides its most severely disabled Soldiers and their families with a system of advocacy and follow-up.

<http://www.armyds3.org>

Have an article, announcement, or website that you'd like to share with the National Guard Family Program Community? Send your suggestions in an e-mail to Michelle.Bohlen@ngb.af.mil.

Isle General Leads in Afghanistan. Command Switches as Maj. Gen. Olson Returns with His Schofield Unit

Honolulu Star Bulletin

March 15, 2005

By Gregg K. Kakesako

gkakesako@starbulletin.com

Hawaii-born two-star general Jason Kamiya is taking over command of the 17,900 ground troops in Afghanistan from the head of the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks.

Jason Kamiya: The '72 Saint Louis graduate takes command of ground troops in Afghanistan

Kamiya assumed command of the Combined Joint Task Force 76 yesterday at Kandahar, Afghanistan, from Maj. Gen. Eric Olson, commander of the 25th Infantry Division.

Olson and his staff are expected to return today and unfurl the colors of his Schofield Barracks unit at Wheeler Army Air Field, signaling the unit's official return after nearly a year in Afghanistan. The unit has been returning to Oahu in recent weeks.

"I think this is a very strong coalition over here. It continues to be and it's actually growing in strength," Olson said in a Pentagon release yesterday.

Much of the division's training focused on low-intensity warfare, as opposed to major war-fighting operations, Olson said, which is exactly what the soldiers encountered, he added.

More than 5,500 Schofield Barrack soldiers under Olson's command left Hawaii a year ago for Afghanistan. Another 5,000 soldiers commanded by Olson were sent to Iraq, of whom all but about 1,000 are back at Wahiawa.

Kamiya, a 1972 Saint Louis School graduate, deployed to Europe from Vicenza, Italy, with 2,000 soldiers as head of the Southern European Task Force (Airborne). His command will include 3rd and 4th brigades and headquarters elements of the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, N.Y., and the 53rd Infantry Brigade and headquarters elements from the Florida **National Guard**.

He is married to the former Carmen Unciano, a 1973 Waimea High School graduate whom he met while attending Gonzaga University in Washington. Kamiya's father, Lawrence, fought with the famed 100th Battalion during World War II.

National Guard to Welcome Home Troops with Big Ceremony at War Memorial Stadium

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KAIT Jonesboro

March 15, 2005

LITTLE ROCK, AR - The Arkansas National Guard says it will use Little Rock's War Memorial Stadium for a ceremony to welcome home Guard and Reserve troops returning from Iraq.

The celebration will be May 21.

About 3,000 troops will march onto War Memorial field to start the ceremony. Speakers will make remarks and there will be a tribute to Arkansans who died in the war. The troops will be dismissed before a free barbecue lunch is served to the soldiers, their spouses and children. Soldiers can bring as many people to the event as they like. But officials say that only the soldiers and their immediate families will receive the free lunch.

Lunch is to be followed by a live concert, but the name of the featured act has not yet been released.

While the timing is tied to the return of the 39th Brigade, the Guard says the celebration is for any reserve service member who has mobilized or deployed since September 11, 2001.

Since that date, the Arkansas National Guard has deployed about 6,000 of its 10,000 soldiers and airmen. Since the start of the war in March 2003, twenty-three Arkansas soldiers have been killed in Iraq.

The Guard expects to fill War Memorial Stadium and serve the free lunch to about 18,000 people. The event is not publicly funded and is being supported by several local merchants and Arkansas companies.

Farewell to Arms; Guard Returns From Iraq to Cheers, Tears

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Portland Tribune

18 March 2005

By Ben Jacklet

“When I left she could say a few words,” he said. “Now she’s speaking in full sentences.”

The long-gone soldier finally was reunited with his daughter Thursday morning. They were swept up in a current of long-suppressed emotions as the first wave of 700 Oregon citizen soldiers returned home from Iraq.

Parents, wives and children of the soldiers of the Oregon “I am so relieved that Robert is home,” she said.

Richard Hill, the young radio communications expert returning to Beaverton, held his mother while she wept and then worked his way through the dozen or so other family members who came to greet him.

“It’s incredible to be home and see the evergreen trees again,” he said. “It’s been so long.”

Asked what he planned to do next, Hill smiled and shrugged: “Enjoy life, instead of taking it for granted.”

Hill’s 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, woke up well before dawn to drive from all over the Northwest to Fort Lewis, Wash. They arrived as early as 5 a.m. for the 8:30 a.m. ceremony, bringing homemade welcome signs decorated with finger paint and glitter.

Soldiers from the battalion hailed from all over Oregon and the Northwest.

They served in Baghdad, Sadr City, Fallujah and Najaf. Eight of them were killed during their tour of duty in Iraq.

The survivors came home to varying situations. Some had enough money saved up to pursue educations and careers. Others had plans to head back overseas, to join the military effort in Afghanistan.

Still others returned to complicated family situations, broken marriages and debt.

One father described his son’s combat bonus as “\$3.51 a day extra to get shot at.”

Another parent said of her child: “I’m worried about him; I’m worried about his mental health after what he’s seen over there.”

The family members came early and waited tensely.

Tony and Connie Farkas arrived at 5 a.m. in the 1991 Chevy Silverado they had bought for their son, Spc. John Montgomery.

Connie Farkas said she only had \$1,500 of the \$2,500 asking price for the truck, but the seller, a Vietnam veteran, told her that he’d let her pay the rest in installments once he learned that her son was serving in Iraq — even though another prospective buyer had the full asking price in cash.

Jeff and Kim Crowell of Forest Grove roused their 6-year-old twins out of bed at 2:30 a.m. to welcome their cousin, 38-year-old Chad Erb of Newberg, back to the Northwest. They joined a party of 20 family members to make the trip to Fort Lewis.

Lorri Strickland of Vancouver, Wash., brought her 8-year-old daughter, Amy, back to the military base where she was born to see her father, Sgt. Ross Strickland.

Strickland said her 35-year-old ex-husband told her he volunteered for Iraq after years of noncombat assignments in the military because he believed the conflict was something he had trained for his whole life. “We’re hoping he’s cured of that,” she said.

Some of the reunions were complicated. Staff Sgt. David Schaefer’s parents, Greg and Denise, expressed mixed feelings as they waited to greet their son. On the one hand, they

were as thrilled and relieved as everyone around them, looking forward to drinking some coffee with their son and doing some fishing. But they also knew that his marriage had faltered during their absence, and his two young children had been taken to parts unknown.

“He promised me that he would come home and give me a hug,” Denise Schaefer said. “He’s been through a lot.

“He doesn’t know where his kids are. He’s going to see all these kids come running to their dads, and his kids won’t be here. Can you imagine how that’s going to feel?”

Jeanette Gibbons of Portland had a hard time expressing her feelings. She sat nervously, reading a Stephen King novel. The 42-year-old Portland woman and Staff Sgt. Tommy Gibbons Jr., also 42, got married the day before he left for his tour of duty.

“We got our license one day, got married the next day and he left the day after that,” she said. “People ask me, ‘How’s it feel to be married?’ I say, ‘I don’t know.’ ”

Gibbons said she worried that the war experience had “taken a lot out of” her husband, physically and emotionally.

“I’m just glad he’s back,” she said.

The 131 soldiers in the first wave arrived exhausted but exhilarated. Their flight was delayed in Kuwait and stopped over in Ireland, just in time for early St. Patrick’s Day festivities.

They stood in formation, beaming, until they heard the long-awaited word: “Dismissed.”

Families rushed at one another to let out emotions long suppressed.

For the past 18 months, Doreen Chesnut has been waiting for her son to return safely from Iraq.

The regular e-mails and weekly phone calls from her 24-year-old son, Spc. Richard Hill, were “what kept me going,” she said. “If it went over two weeks where I didn’t hear from him, I’d start to get frantic.”

The Beaverton mom finally was reunited with her son Thursday morning, and her relief spilled out in tears, in sharp contrast to his big smile.

In between the hugs and the handshakes, many of the soldiers said they had changed.

“I’ve seen a lot of stuff that I wish I hadn’t,” said 21-year-old Spc. Andrew Campbell, who lost four friends when explosives went off. “I’ve also done a lot of things I never would’ve had a chance to do.”

Robert Caldwell, 22, traded hugs with his mother, Gail Mason of Salem; his wife, April; and their 17-month-old daughter, Aryean. His mom said that her other son, Jacob, died in a car accident just before Robert left for Iraq.

I am so relieved that Robert is home,” she said.

Richard Hill, the young radio communications expert returning to Beaverton, held his mother while she wept and then worked his way through the dozen or so other family members who came to greet him.

“It’s incredible to be home and see the evergreen trees again,” he said. “It’s been so long.”

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BENEFITS

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N.C. Legislation Could Cut Taxes for Servicemen Backers Hopeful Despite Shortfall

The Daily Tar Heel

March 11, 2005

By Michelle Mendonca

Staff Writer

North Carolina might soon take another step toward becoming the most military-friendly state in the nation.

Next week, the N.C. House Committee on Military, Veterans and Indian Affairs will consider a bill that could give a big tax break to current and retired military personnel. The bill was proposed Feb. 7 by Rep. Bill Culpepper, D-Chowan.

If approved, it will exempt members of the armed forces from paying income taxes on their military compensation — or for Army Reserve and **National Guard** members, their active-duty pay.

The bill, which is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2004, also exempts most retirement pay and survivor benefits. It applies to all members of the armed forces, guard members and reservists.

According to a fiscal note attached to the bill, there were about 25,500 military personnel who legally lived in North Carolina in 2001.

If the bill passes the military committee, it would then be seen by the House Finance Committee.

Rep. Rick Glazier, D-Cumberland, a member of both committees, said he expects to be seeing a lot of this bill soon, even though the state faces a \$1.3 billion budget surplus.

“There is a lot of support for it on the military committee,” he said. “Passage of the bill will do nothing but benefit the state with regard to (base relocations and closings).”

Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue has been placed in charge of ensuring that this year’s BRACs, ordered by the U.S. Department of Defense, go over smoothly.

Glazier added that the bill’s support is “greatly bipartisan.” Co-sponsors come from both parties.

Ramona Joyce, spokeswoman for the American Legion's national office, said the organization endorses this type of legislation.

"We certainly applaud states that go the extra mile to improve the quality of life for military personnel," she said.

Local veterans also back the measure. "We wholeheartedly support it," said Frank Stancil, department adjutant of the American Legion in Raleigh.

Rep. Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, also introduced a bill in February for tax exemptions for military personnel. Moore's bill exempts only current, active-duty members who are either full-time officers, enlistees or draftees — as opposed to Culpepper's, which covers retiree pay, too.

"It is a good policy to provide additional benefits for people who are retired members of the armed forces as well as current members," Glazier said.

"There are other states which have tax credits or exemptions, and if we are going to be the most military-friendly state in the country, which we are trying, this (bill) needs to be a part of our agenda."

Caring for the Families of Fallen Soldiers

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The Hill

March 17, 2005

By Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.)

There is no greater act of heroism than serving your country in uniform. For more than two centuries, American men and women have given their lives to gain and defend the freedoms we enjoy today. In return for their bravery, we owe them our deepest gratitude.

In his inaugural address, President Kennedy said, "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." The men and women of our armed forces have put their lives on the line every day to keep that promise. It is time for us to keep our promise to them.

The Honoring Every Requirement of Exemplary Service (Heroes) Act, which Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) and I have introduced, will meet our obligations to care for the families of our fallen. Our bill will ensure that the loved ones of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice will not face their loss with undue financial hardship. It will show a measure of gratitude and respect for our military heroes.

For the past two years, as members of the Armed Services Committee, Sen. Sessions and I have worked with the Department of Defense in crafting this comprehensive plan for enhancing the death benefits paid to the families of our men and women in uniform.

The Heroes Act will increase the death benefit for those killed in action from \$12,000 to \$100,000 — regardless of rank — and make the change retroactive to October 2001 to

cover those killed in Afghanistan as well as Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Just last year, Congress raised the benefit from \$6,000 to \$12,000 and indexed it to the rate of inflation. But even that amount was clearly insufficient because it was based on a time when service members tended to be young, single men. Now, more than 60 percent of our servicemen and -women on active duty have a family.

On my visits with our troops serving in Iraq, I have seen many members of the **National Guard** and Reserve who are in their 30s, 40s, and 50s with dependents at home, who have left good-paying jobs to answer their call to duty. Raising the benefit amount to \$100,000 — and doing it retroactively — will lessen the financial hardship so many families have had to endure.

Under the Heroes Act, we will also increase the servicemen's group life insurance benefits to a maximum \$400,000 and cover the premium for the first \$150,000 for troops serving in a combat zone.

Finally, we will also direct the military to discuss the level of insurance selected with a spouse or other beneficiary to ensure family members are informed and are fully participating in these important decisions.

Death benefits are only one aspect of military benefits that need to be changed. We are also working to improve military pay, military housing and combat pay, increase the family separation allowance, and improve healthcare benefits.

We have seen many examples of the compassion and generosity of the American people. Most recently, Americans gave hundreds of millions of dollars in private donations to help those whose livelihood was destroyed by a devastating tsunami. I have no doubt that Americans are eager to do everything they can to show their thanks to the men and women who are fighting terrorism and tyranny on their behalf.

As President Theodore Roosevelt once said, "A man who is good enough to shed blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards."

The "square deal" for our service members should apply not only to them but to their families, too. And it should apply foremost to those that have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is the least we, as a nation, can do.

Lieberman is the ranking member of the Armed Services Airland Subcommittee.

Illinois a Leader in Offering Extra Help to Military

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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

March 19, 2005

By CHRISTOPHER WILLS, Associated Press Writer

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. - The two years of war in Iraq have been two years of uncertainty for Illinoisans in the military. The troops don't know where they will serve, what dangers they'll face or how their families will be affected.

The state has been trying to reduce some of that uncertainty, at least on the homefront.

Illinois created a Military Family Relief Fund to aid the families of those called to active duty in the reserves and the **National Guard**, and 10 other states have since adopted the idea, officials say.

It also started offering roughly \$268,000 to the families of those killed on active duty, something it has long done for the families of slain police and firefighters.

Troops even have guarantees that they won't miss out on job and educational opportunities because of their service. Lawmakers last year made it illegal to discriminate based on military status, and soldiers who must drop out of college get the chance to pick up where they left off.

Col. Richard Nyalka, president of the **National Guard** Association of Illinois, called the state benefits "very helpful and very important."

"I think it's a good thing the state of Illinois is doing to make sure they protect the service men and women," said Nyalka, a full-time guardsman who works at Scott Air Force Base.

The assistance hasn't been a factor in recruiting, but it plays an important role in giving Guard members peace of mind, said **National Guard** spokeswoman Lt. Col. Alicia Tate Nadeau.

"We want the service member to know we're back here taking care of their family," she said.

Of all the state's programs for people in the armed forces and their families, the Family Relief Fund probably assists the most people.

It provides \$500 grants when a member of the Guard or reserves is called to active duty, and up to \$2,000 is available for families struggling to make ends meet. Grants of \$2,000 go to any family in which the service member is wounded or killed.

Since the program began two years ago, \$2.7 million has been awarded to 5,000 Illinois families, said Eric Schuller, policy adviser to Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn, who has played a key role on veterans issues.

Money for the grants comes from state funds, private donations and contributions through a "check-off" on state income tax forms.

In addition to the states that have set up similar program, 24 states are considering family relief funds, he said.

"It's people taking care of their own," Schuller said. "These are your neighbors. They're the guy down the street or your friend's kid."

Schuller estimated the state would pay about \$13 million in benefits to the families of soldiers already killed in the line of duty. The payments were approved in October but applied retroactively to Illinois troops killed since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

According to the Defense Department, 67 Illinoisans have been killed in military operations since the terrorist attacks. The lieutenant governor's office, which also counts people originally from Illinois but not residents at the time of their death, puts the figure

at 92.

With more Guard members and reservists being called up for long periods, officials wanted to make sure employers didn't refuse to hire members of the military, so they changed the state's anti-discrimination law last year to add military status as a protected class. Schuller said Illinois was the first to offer that kind of protection.

Nyalka, of the **National Guard** Association, didn't know of any Guard members who had been rejected for jobs because of their service, but he said he appreciated having the law's protection.

"Hopefully, it will never be used," he said.

Illinois lawmakers are also considering other potential benefits.

Pending legislation would create a new lottery game to support health programs for veterans, including treatment for stress.

Another bill would require businesses to give 30 days of unpaid leave to the families of troops called to active duty. The leave could be used for errands normally handled by the absent soldier or to visit when the soldier is home on leave.

Schuller said the leave measure was inspired by cases in which businesses refused to let husbands and wives take time off when a long-absent spouse came home.

"That is cold as cold can get," he said.

HOMEFRONT: DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH

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War Brings Change for Soldier and for His Family at Home

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

March 15, 2005

By Valley City Times-Record

VALLEY CITY, N.D. - For Steve and Mary Lee Nielson, Johnny came marching home again in March 2004, when their son, Matt, of the 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion, got off the plane in Fargo.

"When Matt went to Iraq, he decided that the military wasn't going to change him," Steve said.

But war did change Matt. War changed Steve and Mary Lee, too.

During Matt's deployment with the 142nd, from January 2003 to March 2004, Steve's new morning routine was to watch CNN.

"Mary Lee didn't like that," he said. "She didn't want to see the news."

Now, Steve still finds that seeing other parents of his son's battalion - or parents of the recently returned 141st Engineer Combat Battalion - is an emotional experience.

"Patriotic songs do that for me too," he said, "because I think back to how I felt when he was over there."

Matt's learning curve, courtesy of the **National Guard**, was more stark: He learned to confront death, and accept that he could die. "You have to do this," he said, "or you live scared."

His harsh lesson came quickly. It started when the citizen-soldiers were issued live ammunition in Kuwait. When they entered Iraq in April 2003, the active war to take Baghdad was still raging.

"Our convoy went through Baghdad at night. We heard mortar rounds, saw tracers. That's when you start reaching conclusions about life and death," he explained matter-of-factly.

With the realization that death might be waiting around the next bend in the road came a liberating feeling. "What happens is that you live each day to the fullest, and your attitude changes," he said.

Matt can look back now, a year after his return from war, and say that it was a great experience. He remembers the frustrations and discomfort, too, which help give him perspective for day-to-day life as a college student.

"Now when I get stressed," he said, "I remind myself that it can't be as hard as war."

As a carpenter with the 142nd, Matt's war involved construction. Although his M-16 A2 was never more than a grab away, Matt built wooden tent floor, outhouses, and shelving units.

He was proudest of the lofts the soldiers built in a big hangar at Camp Anaconda, north of Baghdad. Military intelligence units lived in the high-ceilinged hangar. The addition of lofts and stairs gave the guys twice the space, and honed Matt's carpentry skills.

With a touch of pride, he said, "Chief Carrol - he was in charge - told us, 'You guys did twice the work in half the time with half the manpower of a regular army unit.'"

On the homefront, Mary Lee and Steve's war took a different shape, one full of prayer chains, and packages sent to their son. "I was amazed at the number of prayer chains Matt was on," Mary Lee said, "and that doesn't even count friends and relatives all over the country who were praying for him."

Like most parents, the Nielsons sent packages to their son, with beef jerky and other favorites. On the receiving end, Matt learned to barter for other stuff he wanted. "That jerky was the high value trade," he said. "One stick of beef jerky was worth a couple of beef stew meals from someone else."

Anything to tempt the taste buds was a blessing, he said. When summer temps soared to 153 degrees, Matt lost his appetite. He dropped from 165 pounds to 135 pounds by August.

The Nielsons noticed other, more significant changes. "Justice is a big issue with him,"

Steve said. "It always was, but I think he feels more empowered now. He knows he can do something."

Matt echoes that, in his own assessment. "Now I look for better ways to do things, and make changes," he said.

Matt, a third-year student at Valley City State with a double major in chemistry education and business education, wants to be out of college right now.

"I'm still in college, but feel like I shouldn't be," he said, searching for an explanation. "I know I could learn more in one year on the job."

He also is more alert when he drives, noticing the little things. "It's a scanning issue," he said. "I continually look around, look in ditches, look right and left."

When asked if there is anything he misses about a year in a war zone, he has a quick answer: "I miss sleeping with 11 guys in a 16- by 32- tent ... We got really close in our squad. I miss the guys."

At times, he also misses the freedom, as an E-4 enlisted man, of being in charge of absolutely nothing. "I did my work, and then I was done," Matt said. While he wouldn't want to have that lack of responsibility all the time, he said, "now and then, it's nice."

Since his return, he's being trained in nuclear biological chemical warfare (NBC). After a stint this summer at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, he'll be his unit's NBC specialist with the rank and responsibility of sergeant.

This year, he became engaged to Annette Finke, whom he met in Dr. Hilde van Gijssel's biology class. "Dr. van Gijssel takes full credit for that," he joked. Matt and Annette, now a nursing student in Bismarck, are planning a June 2006 wedding in Berthold after they graduate.

Although Matt was the one in Iraq, Mary Lee feels a little like a veteran, too. After Matt returned, they went to the meeting of a support group of the 141st, which was then deployed in Iraq. She shared her own feelings, and gave suggestions about what to send in those overseas packages.

Something else at the meeting touched her heart. Matt was sitting between two women who had children going to Iraq with the 141st. She watched how they kept touching his arms, knowing that he had been where their children were going, and he came back.

"I found out the value of friendships," she said. "It's important to stay in touch with your friends, and learn to lean on people."

A Soldier's Widow Receives Gift of Undying Love

The Associated Press

March 19, 2005

ALEXANDRIA, Minn. - It was a gift of undying love from a soldier who didn't make it home from Iraq.

Stacey Lhotka believes it could only have been sent by God. With a little help, that is, from her husband, Jesse.

Jesse Lhotka died Feb. 21, at age 24, killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. He died along with two other members of the Minnesota **National Guard**: Jason Timmerman and David Day.

Jesse and Stacey Lhotka got married Sept. 18. They spent a happy, but stressful month together as he readied to ship out Oct. 14.

When he came home for Christmas, one of his first stops was Wal-Mart. Jesse told Stacey he needed a "jump drive," a tiny device that would let him move information from one computer to another, much like a floppy disk.

On Valentine's Day, he sat in his Humvee in Baghdad taping a video for military exercises. He got an idea. He turned the camera on himself. He tried to send a little clip to Stacey, but it didn't work. Stacey was disappointed, but let it go.

Jesse died a week later.

Last week, a military officer brought her some things Jesse had on him when he died. Among them were his wedding ring, a cross necklace identical to hers, and the jump drive.

Stacey went to a computer store on her way to work Wednesday to see if someone there could find out what it held. An employee got it to play.

Stacey, 30, sat down and watched. It was a love song from a soldier to his wife.

"Good morning, beautiful. How are you?" Jesse sang.

He told her how much he missed her, how much he loved her more than anything. And he said he couldn't wait to come home so they could begin looking for a house and start a family.

"Send me some clips of houses you look at so I can see them on my next leave," he said.

He concluded with "See you later," because they never said "goodbye."

"I feel comfort in knowing that nothing can stop you from having eternal love," she said. "I'm never alone. Jesse is with me. I truly, truly believe that there is no one or anything that can take that away from us."

Program Established to Help Soldiers and Their Families

9News.com

17 March 2005

COLORADO SPRINGS (AP) - More than \$1.25 million donated to a newly established foundation will go to help Colorado families of reserve, **national guard** and active-duty military members in an effort organizers hope will be a model for other states.

National Homeland Defense Foundation, created in October to promote support from citizens, corporations and academia for the war on terrorism, will announce its program during a news conference Thursday.

Bill Harris, the foundation's president and CEO, said the agency will work with bases and other groups to identify those in need as well as establish the criteria.

"This is an opportunity for us to continue the tradition of providing support to Colorado-based troops," said Bill Hybl, chairman and chief executive of the El Pomar Foundation, which donated \$250,000 to the foundation to help families of soldiers stationed at military bases in Colorado Springs, Denver, and the Air Force Academy.

Homebuilder MDC Holdings, Inc., Charitable Foundation of Denver earmarked its \$1 million gift for Colorado reservists and guard members and their families.

It was unclear how much need is out there, but Hybl offered anecdotal evidence of need based on an earlier \$150,000 program, which was depleted in about 14 months.

Among those who benefited was a woman from Texas who came to Fort Carson to help her son recover from a grenade attack and had her hotel bill paid. The program also paid for a woman's flight to Colorado to care for her grandchildren after her son-in-law deployed overseas and her daughter was hospitalized.

Retired U.S. Northern Command chief Air Force Gen. Ralph "Ed" Eberhart, who also commanded the North American Aerospace Defense Command, will be chairman the board. John Gannon, former CIA deputy director for intelligence, past National Intelligence Council chairman and, until recently, majority staff director for the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, will also serve on the board.

A charitable foundation in Utah established a similar program before the holidays that helped fly 14 service members home before they deployed.

New Career Center Launches for Military Severely Injured Career Center Rallies Public and Private Sector Resources to Support Wounded Service Members

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San Francisco, CA - March 16, 2005 A new online employment and education resource launched today in support of the Department of Defense Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center (24/7 Family Support).

The new Career Center, located online at www.Military.com/support and accessible via 1-888-774-1361, builds on efforts by the Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center to ensure that Servicemembers with severe injuries have easy access to all available resources to assist with their recovery and rehabilitation.

The Career Center offers an extensive job board powered by Monster, the leading global online careers property, as well as employment assistance, education options and benefits information for severely injured Servicemembers and their families. The Career Center also enables employers to express their interest in hiring people from this exceptional talent pool.

Resources are drawn from the Office of Military Community and Family Policy as well as from every branch of military service, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor and private organizations. Personalized assistance includes:

- Education, training and job placement
- Personal mobility and functioning
- Home, transportation and workplace accommodations
- Personal, couple and family counseling
- Financial resources
- Medical care and rehabilitation

"We want to make certain that these heroes are taken care of -- not only for the period of their recovery, but until they feel they have made the transition back into a community and a productive life," said Jane Burke, Principal Director, Military Community and Family Policy, about the opening of the Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center.

This effort involves collaboration between military organizations, government agencies, private organizations and employers who have rallied to support those seriously injured in service to America.

Military and government support components of this program include:

- Air Force Palace Helping Airmen Recover Together (HART)
- Army Disabled Soldier Support System (DS3)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

- Department of Labor, REALifelines
- Marine for Life Injured Support Program (M4L)
- Navy Wounded Marines & Sailors Initiative
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Walker expressed his appreciation at the opening of the Center, "It comforts me to know that the Department of Defense is doing their best taking care of wounded soldiers and their families. This is going to be a good program to assist the wounded soldier, whether with medical boards or finding housing for family members." The 17-year veteran, wounded in Iraq, fought for his life after sustaining severe head injuries.

Getting Involved

Employers seeking to hire people from this exceptional talent pool can indicate their interest at www.Military.com/support. Educational institutions and other service providers can also offer their resources for severely injured. Messages of support can be posted on the site as well.

About the Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center (24/7 Family Support)

The center is staffed 24/7 and accessible toll free at 1-888-774-1361. Additional resources can be reached online at www.Military.com/support.

For more information, contact Commander David Julian at 703-908-6236.

About Military Advantage & Military.com

Founded in 1999, Military Advantage, Inc. owns and operates Military.com, the largest online military destination serving 4 million members, including active duty personnel, reservists, guard members, retirees, veterans, family members, defense workers and those considering military careers. Military.com enables the 30 million Americans with military affinity to access their benefits, advance their careers, enjoy military discounts, and stay connected for life. Military Advantage develops efficient affinity marketing and communications programs for government agencies and companies serving this market. Military Advantage is a subsidiary of Monster Worldwide, Inc., the parent company of Monster, the leading global careers property. More information on the company is available at www.military.com.

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other risks discussed in Monster Worldwide's Form 10-K and other filings made with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which discussions are incorporated in this release by reference.

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