

# Bolt

---

359th Signal Brigade  
Fall 2008







# *BOLT*

## ***The 359th Signal Brigade Magazine***

Commander: Brig. Gen. Geoff A. Freeman

Deputy Commander: Col. Michael S. Healy

CSM: Command Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Dehorty

Safety Manager: Lt. Col. Scott Wisnieski

Public Affairs Officer: 1st Lt. Michelle Lunato

Editor: Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte

Bolt is produced in the interest of the Soldiers serving in and under the 359th Signal Brigade.

It is an unofficial publication as authorized by AR-360-1. Opinions expressed are those of the individuals and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. government, Department of the Army or its agencies.

All photos are property of the U.S. Army, unless otherwise credited.

Bolt is published by the 300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment located at Fort Gillem, Ga.

E-mail submissions to the 300th MPAD at [gary.a.witte@us.army.mil](mailto:gary.a.witte@us.army.mil).

### **Brigade Headquarters phone numbers:**

Commander 706-791-9069    Deputy Commander 706-791-9593

Command Sgt. Maj. 706-791-5757    Personnel 706-791-5746

Administration 706-791-5764    Plans 706-791-9191

Safety Manager 706-791-1217    PAO 334-332-0755



# CONTENTS



Commander's Column	3	Family groups make mission possible	11
Soldiers enter Order of Mercury	4	Recovery requires support	12
392nd Welcome Home Warrior	5-6	Know the Command	13
Spouse shares advice	7	300th MPAD family day	14
820th Signal Company realigns	8	CSM's Column	15
Headquarters family day	9-10		
Resources you can use	11	Cover: Lucus Berthelotte, 2-years-old, perfects his shot with a steady position, concentrated aim and a slow trigger squeeze. (Photo by 1st Lt. Michelle Lunato)	



# Readiness depends on support from home

This quarter's Bolt highlights Family Readiness Groups and the extremely important role these organizations play in our overall unit readiness. It's important, therefore, that we all understand just what an FRG is and how it can help us – Soldier and family members – all be better prepared for our duties.

The Army defines an FRG as “a unit commander's program that includes unit Soldiers, civilian employees, family members (immediate and extended) and volunteers. FRG's are integral to the morale and support of Soldiers and Families before, during, and after deployments.

“The group functions as a communications mechanism, bringing accurate information to the Families from the command, and serving as an informal chain of concern to bring issues back up to the commander. It is structured by the needs of the unit; some FRG's are large, very active and all encompassing, to include parents, friends, and significant others in their information chain. Others are small, tailored only to the immediate requirements of a non-deployed unit.”

These groups are critical to maintaining the strength, morale and information chain for Soldiers, families, and the command.

But what is it they actually do? Family Readiness Groups run phone trees that help family members stay in touch



## Commander's Corner

Brig. Gen. Geoff A. Freeman

*When working properly, the Family Readiness Groups also provide a sense of family outside of the Soldier's traditional family.*

with each other. It's no surprise that during a deployment, many families experience “life events” like births, deaths, natural disasters, and perhaps not so critical events like broken appliances, leaking roofs, and cars that just don't want to start.

These phone trees give a family member someone to contact for help, even if it's just to offer concern and support. FRG's also provide crucial information to family members, especially before and after deployments.

The FRG is my way as a commander to communicate directly with spouses and families. Many times the Soldier knows the information but fails to pass it along to his family. It's critical, then, that the Family Readiness Groups serve as a way to communicate directly with the family – not bypassing the Soldier, but serving as a redundant source of information.

When working properly, the Family Readiness Groups also provide a sense of family outside of the Soldier's traditional family. Phone calls, meetings, social events, and family days all serve to connect the families to the larger Army family.

When the 324th Signal Battalion deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, its Soldiers came from all over the continental United States.

They were from more than 30 different states, and in many cases, the Soldiers' families lived nowhere near a military post or facility. That type of situation can easily lead to a sense of being totally alone.

The battalion's Family Readiness Groups made sure that didn't happen most of the time. Regardless of how physically isolated a family might be, the groups serve as that link back into the Army family and its support services. Without FRG's, and especially Army Reserve FRG's, our Soldiers simply could not continue to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom or the Global War on Terrorism.

Family Readiness Group members are often family members like you. They are wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, and sometimes just

*Continued on Page 16*



1st Lt. Michelle Lunato

The 359th Signal Brigade, Headquarters, Headquarters Company held its Family Day on July 13 at Fort Gordon, Ga.





Phil Oviatt

From left, Lt. Col. Walter "Van" Milne, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Hermelinda Larson and Sergeant 1st Class Brent Hamill were each honored with the Order of Mercury during an Aug. 9 ceremony.

## Signal Soldiers join elite few with award

**By Spc. Maria Reynolds**  
300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORT GORDON, Ga. -- Standing before their comrades from the 359th Tactical Theater Signal Brigade, three Soldiers were awarded the Bronze Order of Mercury during the commander's conference annual dinner.

The awardees were Lt. Col. Walter "Van" Milne, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Hermelinda Larson and Sergeant 1st Class Brent Hamill.

The ceremony took place on Aug. 9, when Maj. Gen. Dennis Lutz, commander of the 335th Theater Signal Command and Brig. Gen. Geoffrey Freeman, commander of the 359th TTSB presented the medals to the unsuspecting Soldiers.

Awarded with a bronze or silver medal donned on the traditional orange ribbon of the Signal Corp, the Order of Mercury represents the contribution of excellence within the Signal Corps Regimental Association. The medal bears a representation of Mercury, the Greek messenger of the

gods, signifying the importance of the Signal Corps mission.

The gold Order of Mercury is only awarded posthumously.

The SCRA is a private, nonprofit organization composed of Soldiers, civilians, contractors and former Soldiers that works to improve the standards and maintain the traditions of the Signal Regiment, explained Maj. Jane Tamboli, plans officer with the 359th TTSB.

The three awardees were nominated by Tamboli, who is a life member, for their dedication to the Signal Corps. Nominees for the award can only be submitted by other members of the SCRA.

"All three of them really have been unsung heroes," Tamboli said, adding that the three are Soldiers who people continually turn to and they contribute countless hours towards helping and teaching others.

Milne has worked with the 359th TTSB since 1999 and serves as the special projects officer. He has been a member of the SCRA for almost

six years. Milne has served with the military for 30 years, including four and a half years of service with the United States Coast Guard.

Larson, a retired command sergeant major who has been with the 359th TTSB for eight years, serves as a civilian staff administration assistant. Larson has been a member of the SCRA since 2000.

As a Soldier, she received many awards including a Meritorious Army Medal, and Army Commendation Medal and a Legion of Merit.

Hamill, an information systems specialist, said the award was unexpected.

"I was shocked, happy and surprised," he said. "I didn't see this coming."

Hamill has received many awards including a Bronze Star, five Army Commendation Medals and 7 Army Achievement Medals.

"They all go above and beyond the duties of a Reserve Soldier," said Tamboli, "and I feel privileged getting to work with them."



# Friends, families welcome unit back home



Photos by 1st Lt. Michelle Lunato



## COMMAND & COMMUNICATE



In September, the 392nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion held its Welcome Home Warrior ceremony and a family day event following its return from deployment. Above, Staff Sgt. William Long, a cable systems installer with Company A, explains to a WBAL TV reporter what it's like to return home. Top right, Cpl. Aaron Reed, a cable systems installer with Company C, accepts his Army Commendation medal from Brig. Gen. Geoffrey Freeman, commanding general, 359th Signal Brigade. Bottom Right, Sgt. Christopher Cymex, a network systems manager with C Company, accepts his Welcome Home Warrior Award from Freeman with family right at his side. Opposite page: Top, Sgt. 1st Class James Kalin, switch systems chief of Company C escapes from 10-year-old Phoebe Clowser, the daughter of Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Clowser. Middle right, Spc. Namatie Mansaray and Sgt. Lakisha Gayden relax in the sun. Both are cable systems installers. Bottom right, Company C 1st Sergeant Carrie A. Cieslak of hands out frosted cookies.





# Soldier's spouse shares story to help others

By Elizabeth M. Lorge  
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – When Soldiers march off to war, so do their spouses, writes one Army wife in her new book. They fight to stay connected with their Soldiers across miles and distance, and to survive on their own.

In “365 Deployment Days: A Wife’s Survival Story,” Sara Dawalt chronicles the loneliness, anger and worry that nearly destroyed her marriage while her husband Brandon, a captain, was deployed with Fort Hood’s 1st Cavalry Division in 2004, and her eventual triumph over it all.

Dawalt said she wrote the book to help people and it’s a useful handbook for spouses and Soldiers on the emotions to expect, what to do and what not to do. Civilians should read it too, she said, so they understand what military Families go through.

“The husbands need to read this book, or the wives, whoever is the Soldier, so they understand what their spouse is going through, because Brandon had no idea. I think a lot of times the guys get over there and it’s easy for them to compartmentalize their lives and if they don’t call or they don’t email, it’s easier for them to focus on what they’re doing and forget that they’re where they are.

“It’s going to take husbands and wives communicating and really really talking to figure out what they can do for each other to make it through it,” she said in an interview.

She knew her husband would eventually deploy after Sept. 11, 2001, and after he received his orders to deploy in March 2004, she began to withdraw and argue with him about little things.

“On more than one occasion, I shouted at him ‘Just go!’ Of course I didn’t want him to go, but knowing it was out there and drawing nearer every day was swallowing me alive. The only way I found to express my frustration was to scream,” she wrote.

Dawalt described barely being able

to handle waiting with her husband for their final goodbye when the departure date arrived. At one point she almost went home because she couldn’t bear it any longer. But after his unit left, the loneliness was crushing.

“I was alone,” she wrote. “Totally, completely, and utterly alone, and there was nothing I could do about it...I felt the overwhelming urge to talk to someone, anyone, to decompress and rant about the unbelievable night I had just experienced. I felt so many emotions that I thought I was going to explode, but who do you call at four in the morning? No one I knew...Instead, I huddled up with my dog, cried, and tried to sleep.”

Dawalt provides a window into her daily life during the deployment: her daily jumbo of emotions, her erratic sleep schedule, the healing power of exercise, retail therapy and the sanity-saving companionship of her dog.

Her life became about the deployment, and not only because of her worry and loss. She couldn’t watch the news. Friends she hadn’t heard from in years called to check up on her, but most people wanted to know about her husband. If they remembered to ask how she was doing, it was usually an afterthought.

“Of course, they should ask about him and be concerned about him, but I really felt like I was just disappearing in his deployment. I was like, ‘Hey, I’m a person too.’ So I’m hoping that by reading, more and more people will start to understand. I think that’s the biggest thing. People need to know to ask about the person who’s still here, trying to hold the life together,” she said.

However painful life is, Dawalt warns spouses against shutting themselves in. A support network is crucial, she said, and spouses should spend time with their friends and doing activities they enjoy. Nor should spouses be afraid to take vacations on their own or with battle buddies, or plan trips

after their spouses’ return. It will make the time go faster, she said.

But husbands and wives have to find ways to stay connected, she said. Her new-found independence came with a price as instant messaging and web cameras, interspersed with a couple calls a month, were not enough communication for her.

As the months stretched out, she realized that she felt less and less like a wife. She still loved her husband, but she couldn’t cope. She didn’t want to talk about her feelings because she didn’t want to worry him or distract him while he was in combat.

“It’s really hard to reconcile,” she said. “You feel like you’re being pulled in two different directions. You want your independence and you like your independence. You’re part of a married couple, but you’re not because he’s not physically there. It was very hard for me and that’s when I started reflecting on myself and my life and realizing I couldn’t wait for him for my life to start.

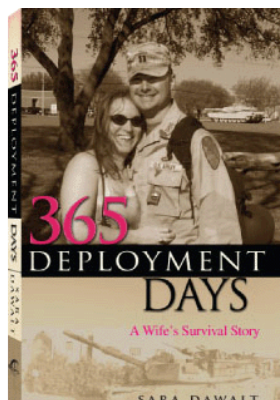
“That was the worst part, feeling totally disconnected from him. Being married, that wasn’t something I ever thought I would experience.”

She was so afraid she would let her feelings show, she barely wanted her husband to come home for rest and relaxation.

When she finally did break down, right before he returned to Iraq, she said it was the best thing that could have happened to her marriage.

She and her husband talked honestly and he understood how hard life was on the homefront. They found ways to talk regularly for the rest of his deployment, and talked almost daily during his second deployment, which just ended.

“My husband has volunteered to be a hero every day, and I couldn’t be prouder of him. The bad, of course, is our time apart and the danger of deployment. The Army ... has strengthened my knowledge of myself and my marriage to the point that both are rock solid,” she wrote.



*Her life became about the deployment, and not only because of her worry and loss.*





An August ceremony in Seagoville, Texas marked the decommissioning of Detachment 2 with the 820th Signal Company.

## Signal company continues its realignment efforts

*Staff Reports*

The 820th Signal Company has grown over the years to include several detachments. In August, its Detachment 2 from Little Rock, Ark. was decommissioned during a ceremony in Seagoville, Texas, to align with Army restructuring efforts.

Last year, the 820th Signal Company moved from the 90th Regional Readiness Command to the 335th Signal Command. The unit's new mission is that of a Tactical Installation Networking company. The unit was previously deployed in 2005 as a cable and wire company. Some Soldiers from Little Rock will now drill with the Headquarters Platoon in Mesquite, Texas.



Photos by 1st Lt. Michelle Lunato



Above, Sgt. 1st Class Clarence McJunkins, squad leader, noncommissioned officer of Detachment 2, assists 1st Lt. David Jacobs, commander of the 820th Signal Company (Tactical Installation Networking), case the guidon of Detachment 2 from Little Rock. At left, Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Grant, squad leader, Headquarters Platoon, picks up his ammunition and heads to his spot on the M16 range.



## COMMAND & COMMUNICATE



Above, the daughters of Staff Sgt. Alexander Gonzalez, 2-year-old Alexandra and 4-year-old Madelaine, concentrate on fishing during the HHC Family Day in July.



Top left, Staff Sgt. Matthew Scott, chemical operations sergeant, HHC, 359th Signal Brigade, carries his daughter around so he can keep up with her better at the HHC Family Day activities. Bottom right, Command Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Dehorty, brigade command sergeant major, 359th Signal Brigade, starts a weapons and candy cache with 4-year-old Jack Tamboli thus demonstrating her "recruit and train" motto.

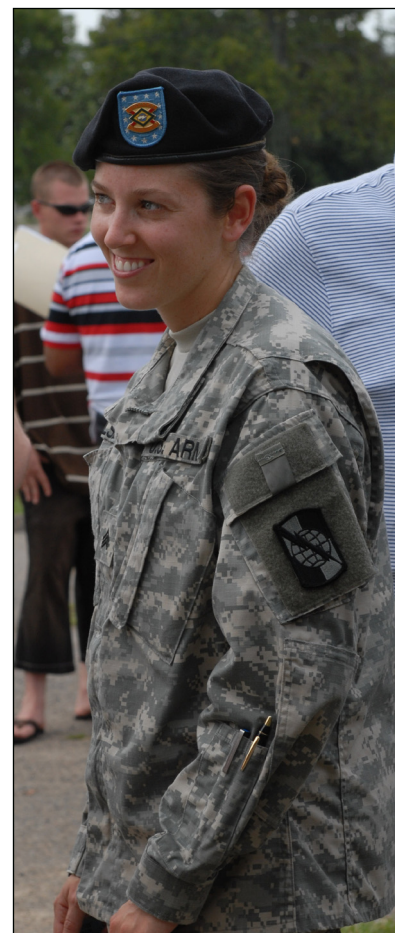






## Headquarters takes a break for fun in the sun

Above, children line up, hoping the one before them does not break the pinata during the 359th Signal Brigade, Headquarters, Headquarters Company's Family Day on July 13 at Fort Gordon, Ga. Below, Capt. Karl Maier, brigade system control officer, HHC, 359th Signal Brigade, douses Capt. Michelle Ahmad, commander, in front of her family day formation. At right, Sgt. Chelsa Hensley with the intelligence section.



Photos by 1st Lt. Michelle Lumato



## Resources you can use

**www.militaryonesource.com**

1-800-342-9647

A 24-hour, seven-day-a-week information resource for military members, spouses and families

**Army Reserve Warrior and Family Assistance Center**

**www.arfp.org/wfac**

1-866-436-6290

**TRICARE North Region**

(HealthNet)

1-877-874-2273

**TRICARE South Region**

(Humana)

1-800-444-5445

1-800-403-3950

**TRICARE West Region**

(TriWest)

1-888-874-9378

**TRICARE Overseas (WPS)**

1-888-777-8343

**TRICARE For Life**

1-866-773-0404

**DMDC Support Office (DEERS Eligibility)**

1-800-538-9552

**TRICARE Mail Order Program (Pharmacy)**

1-866-363-8667

**TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Program**

1-866-363-8779

**MHS Helpdesk (Technical Problems)**

1-800-600-9332

210-767-5250

**Financial Reference Guide**

<http://www.mymoney.gov/pdfs/QuickRefGuide.pdf>

**Emergency Preparedness Guide**

<http://www.opm.gov/emergency/pdf/NationalFamilyGuide.pdf>



1st Lt. Michelle Lumato

**NEW RESPONSIBILITIES** – During a July ceremony, Capt. Michelle Ahmad, commander, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 359th Signal Brigade, passes the sword to 1st Sgt. Bobby Hickson, symbolizing his acceptance of his new role as the HHC first sergeant.

## Readiness groups are essential to mission

**By Spc. Daniel Haun**

*300th MPAD*

**I**t never hurts to have help available, especially when you or someone you love wears a uniform.

Family Readiness Groups develop support networks between families enduring military separation from their spouses and loved ones.

Anthony G. Cooper, the Family Readiness coordinator for the 3rd Medical Command at Fort Gillem, said these organizations help Soldiers continue with their missions, as they both sustain and prepare family members for the changes that come with mobilization.

However, these groups are not self-sustaining without the involved participation of family members.

"Spouses and family members can help ... by becoming an active volunteer and supporter of the Family Readiness Group activities, programs and projects," said Cooper.

The Family Readiness Group is a unit commander's program formed in accordance with Army Regulation 600-20.

In most cases, these groups are established at the company level, with battalion and brigade levels playing an important advisory role.

Membership is not limited to a chosen few.

"Spouses, family members, friends, and anyone who wants to support the Soldiers may join the Family Readiness Group," said Major Jane E. Tamboli, the operations officer for the 359th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade.

Family Readiness Groups not only benefit married Soldiers, but also single Soldiers with relations such as

*"Anyone who wants to support the Soldiers may join ..."*

*Continued on Page 13*



# Resiliency, support crucial for recovery

By Samantha L. Quigley  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Methods of coping with combat and its after effects vary as greatly as the effects themselves, six warriors participating in a recent conference panel said.

The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury hosted the conference. Combat veterans who spoke at the conference described a range of effects and needs.

Army Maj. Stephen Williams was the head nurse with a unit of the 3rd Medical Command's 28th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad when the base was hit with mortars, July 10.

Since then, Williams has dwelled not on what he saw or did that day, but on what he couldn't do – save his battle partner, Army Capt. Maria Ortiz.

"I couldn't provide assistance to my comrade who was actually lying next to me and ended up passing away," said Williams, who was seriously wounded in his leg with a severed femoral artery.

Williams also had to face how his injuries would affect him and his family. When he returned home to convalesce, he said, his young children wouldn't touch him, for fear they would hurt him.

"In hindsight, I didn't know enough to say, 'Hey, we need to talk to them more [deeply] on this,'" he said.

"So, I think there's something more that we could do for the families out there [to] let them come to grips with these situations."

An Army couple at the conference, the Blackledges, also know how crucial it is to have family support during the healing process.

Army Maj. Gen. David Blackledge, a West Point graduate, has served for 32 years and was serving with the 352nd Civil Affairs Command in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in January 2003. He was on his last mission outside the wire before heading home

when his convoy was ambushed. The vehicle he was riding in rolled and, among other injuries, he suffered a crushed vertebra.

It took nearly two years for him to completely recover and return to full duty. During this time his wife, Army Lt. Colonel-select Iwona E. Blackledge, learned how spouses cope with the effects of war.

She had attended family readiness group briefings. It was a good start, but there's really no preparing for what she endured.

"It is very hard to prepare someone for that 5 o'clock call in the morning," she said. "What helped was that it was my husband who called, so I knew he was OK. Once he hung up, I was all alone and that's when the stress started."

Talking to a psychiatrist at Walter Reed Army Medical Center here after her husband arrived gave her an idea of what to expect and how to deal with what might come up, she said.

Blackledge's resiliency after combat, he said, came from family support and belief in the mission. Also, talking about it was a big help, he said.

"When I got to Walter Reed, they immediately assigned a psychologist to me," as is protocol for all traumatic cases returning to the facility, Blackledge said. "He was really helpful because I was going through the dreams and all that stuff. He talked me

through it, gave me some tips on how to deal with that [and] ... what I would expect to deal with over the preceding weeks and months."

Retired Army Capt. Dawn Halfaker said, for her, recovery was a process that began in the hospital. She lost an arm when her vehicle was ambushed with small-arms and rocket-propelled-grenade fire while she was serving in Baqouba, Iraq, in February 2004.

"I really, really would not be, I don't think, here today or the person I am today without the physical therapy and occupational therapy that

I received," Halfaker said. "Although I wasn't certainly busting out pushups or maxing my [physical test] ... I was working toward a goal of getting better.

"That was really, I think, a positive and powerful phase for me," she added.

Then Halfaker entered the reintegration phase and realized it's a journey that never ends.

"Every day something comes up that is difficult or challenging, or socially awkward or, I guess, psychologically challenging," Halfaker said. "I feel like the support I had at Walter

Reed and my family support and just sort of my ability through my work ... to regain that sense of purpose is so critical to get through all those little frustrations."

Retired Army Master Sgt. Christopher Scheuerman reiterated suggestions that leaders throughout the chain of command need to be involved with their troops, even before injuries occur.

After a disciplinary action and corrective training for being what the Army labeled a "malingeringer," Scheuerman's son, Jason, assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division at the time, killed himself, Scheuerman told the audience.

"We have a foundation of support, that foundation being our chain of command, the chaplaincy and medical," Scheuerman said. "Very seldom do all three of those foundations of support fail ... In this case, all three did."

Realizing he was suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, Scheuerman, who trains medics at Fort Bragg, N.C., began seeing a therapist and never failed to mention it to his students.

"Just by telling them that, almost every class, three of four of them would come to me later and say, 'How did you start that? I need to do that, too,'" he said. "We have to err on the side of Soldiers' safety, because if we make a mistake, resiliency breaks down [and] we lose a Soldier."

"It's horrible to lose the Soldiers we have to, [but] it's an absolute tragedy to lose a Soldier we shouldn't."



1st Lt. Michelle Lunato



# Know the Command: In touch worldwide

By Spc. Bryan Randolph  
300th MPAD

The 335th Theater Signal Command, headquartered at East Point, Ga., is a premier executor of the combatant commander's information network.

The command's mission is to manage the telecommunications infrastructure for Southwest Asia (Arabian Peninsula and Iraq, the Northern Red Sea, Horn of Africa, South and Central Asia) in support of U.S. Army Forces Central Command (USARCENT) / Third Army and Central Command (CENTCOM) during peacetime and contingency operations currently underway in forward areas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) / Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Noble Eagle.

The command employs multiple components – Active, Active-Guard / Reserve and Reserve – to meet the challenge. The 335th developed and implemented a robust telecommunications infrastructure to efficiently and accurately move information, data and communications for the war-fighting commander.

The command meets the communications challenge in joint exercises, routine operational missions in the Area of Responsibility and in the continental United States, proving daily to the war-fighting commanders that the 335th has the necessary communications infrastructure to provide command and control of their forces.

Major subordinate units include the 359th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, Fort Gordon, Ga.; 415th Chemical Brigade, Greenville, S.C.; 209th Regional Support Group, Belton, Missouri; and 650th Regional Support Group, Las Vegas, Nev.

Recent deployments and exercises



Patch: Orange and white are the colors associated with the Signal Corps. Dark blue signifies the atmosphere. The flashes and globe are symbolic of the unit's worldwide communication capability. This shoulder sleeve insignia was approved on Oct. 30, 1985.

Insignia: The white and black quadrates and the lightning flashes symbolize the organization's day and night mission to direct and coordinate the operations, training, administration and logistics support of assigned and attached units.

The Live Oak, the State Tree of Georgia and a symbol of ever-ready strength in reserve, also alludes to the organization's origin and home station at Atlanta, Georgia. Orange and white are colors used for the Signal Corps. The distinctive unit insignia was originally approved on Dec. 10, 1971 for the 335th Signal Group. It was redesignated for the 335th Signal Brigade on Dec. 24, 1984. The insignia was redesignated for the 335th Signal Command on April 16, 1986.



for the 335th and its subordinate units include: OIF, OEF, Bright Star, Pacific Warrior, Sharp Focus, Beyond the Horizons, and Grecian Firebolt.

The 335th Signal Command evolved into its present status over a period of more than 40 years.

In February 1953, the 335th was organized in Atlanta, Ga., as a United States Army Reserve Signal Group comprised of 69 soldiers under the Command of a Colonel.

A change in the Army's structure

upgraded the 335th to a Brigade in October 1984.

Concurrently, the unit adopted their own Shoulder Patch and Distinctive Unit Insignia.

A year and a half after obtaining Brigade status, the 335th became a Theater Communications Command.

Restructuring initiatives in the Reserve Component have elevated the 335th to a Major United States Army Reserve Command.

## Support groups

*Continued from Page 11*

parents, siblings and others.

"Single Soldiers also have families," said Tamboli. "Their family members can benefit from FRGs. The goals above apply to Soldiers regardless of marital status."

Cooper noted that Soldiers in

Garrison can provide assistance to Soldiers in theatre by working with a Family Readiness Group.

"Non-deployed soldiers also can help deployed soldiers by becoming an active volunteer and supporter of the Family Readiness Group activities, programs and projects," he said.

Family Readiness Groups can help spouses and family members

become self-reliant, prepare for military separation, learn how to access benefits and entitlements, participate in unit functions, utilize the Army Reserve Family Programs Portal and use the AKO accounts for email communication.

More information is available at Army Reserve Family Programs Web site, [www.artg.org](http://www.artg.org).



# Cooking up family ties

On Aug. 3, the 300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment held its Family Day picnic at Stevens Lake in Fort Gillem, Ga., with each Soldier bringing food or beverages to support the event. The unit provides public affairs support for the 359th Signal Brigade. At top left, Rachel Nye, 2, pets Piper, a mixed breed belonging to retired Staff Sgt. Michael Clifton. Second from top, Pfc. Deseanette McDonald blows up a toy for the children activities at the event. Bottom, Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ware, first sergeant and Spc. Maria Reynolds, print journalist and team leader, cook lunch for the gathering. Below, Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ware presents Staff Sgt. Caroline Maribei (right) with an Army Commendation Medal for her work with the unit as her mother, Charity, looks on. Maribei, a print journalist and former Print Section leader, was discharged from the Army in September at the end of her enlistment. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte)





# Families not always traditional

I had a column written for this issue, but it had nothing to do with family readiness, so my cat wrote you a few words. I adopted her in early 1994, and she has been with me ever since.

She can be such a pill some days or the biggest angel ever. She has also been the truest friend ever and I will not be the same once she leaves; but until then she is the cat of the house.

I am a mere bill payer, which is fine as long as she is home to welcome when I finally get there ... I am Dehorty and I am Soldier.

I am Murphy Brown and I am cat. My human provider is the brigade command sergeant major. I use the phrase "human provider" very loosely though; I believe that she only makes the house payment so I have some place to live while she is gone on her many travels. Did I mention that she is gone a lot?

Every night when she does grace me with her presence and is doing homework or some Army stuff, I sit right next to her. I do it mainly so she stays focused and gets everything done faster; then it is Mommie and Murphy time. I really enjoy Mommie and Murphy time. Sometimes, I just ignore her; mainly to ensure that she understands who's in charge. It isn't Mommie.

The only job that she has had in the Army that I have understood was the drill sergeant thing; but that was a long time ago, way before I came along. Actually, it is also the only job that Grandma Sharon understands, too.

I am writing to say thanks for what you do, though I haven't got a clue. Mom says it is very important and if I wasn't an American cat, life would be very different. I think that she is really smart, so I am sure that she is correct. I say thanks for the long weekends that she gets every now and then; I get to be a COMPLETE pill on those days and still wake her up at 4:15 a.m. Look, I am a cat and I need to eat to keep up my strength.

For your information, I have run off the last two cat/house sitters; Yes, I am that good! Okay, maybe they were just weak, but in the long run I still WON!

She now has an Army friend stop and check on me. That one is tough. I have done my best to run her off, but she

*Continued on Page 17*



## From the CSM

*Command Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Dehorty*

## Family groups face multiple challenges

Recently I attended a course that had a couple hours dedicated to family readiness. The presenter listed four specific challenges in regards to Family Readiness Groups: Geographic Dispersion, Reassigned (cross-leveled) Soldiers, Accurate Soldier/Family Contact Information and Volunteers.

Geographical dispersion – this one is no big surprise. With the Brigade having sites in seven states, we have Soldiers living in more than 15 states. Sometimes it is just a challenge for us to get to BTA and even harder to get families and/or volunteers there at the same time. One solution presented was to have FRG meetings via teleconference. This requires just a little prior planning. It could also mitigate the concerns of crossleveled Soldiers and give support to all families.

Accurate Soldier/family contact information is an ongoing battle. All Soldiers are REQUIRED to provide and maintain current home address and phone numbers on themselves; we need to take that a step further. Completing the forms should not only occur during mobilization. Family readiness is not a program that we can wait until we get alerted and mobilized. Family readiness should be an on-going program; it starts with accurate and maintained family contact information.

The final challenge are volunteers. So often we think our volunteers must be a family member. We miss all the wonderful individuals who aren't family. We are all involved with groups or organizations outside the military; the VFW, American Legion, Girl and Boy Scouts, our local churches and others. All these groups are great venues to nurture volunteers from outside our normal operating base. We need to develop these types of relationships to enhance the depth of our FRGs.

A final tool to help overcome our Family Readiness Challenges is the Army Reserve Family Programs Web site, [www.artg.org](http://www.artg.org).

A couple areas to look at when visiting the site - the download center and the "e-training." These two areas provide a wealth of information. I highly recommend that you take a couple minutes from your busy day and check them out; it will be well worth your time.



Command Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Dehorty



## Readiness

*Continued from Page 3*

friends.

Some are just concerned citizens who support the military and the sacrifice Soldiers make to keep our country free. I know FRG members who continue to participate even though their Soldier is not deployed, and in some cases their Soldier is not even in the Army any more.

Family Readiness Group members are very special people. They see a need and want to fill it. They are every much a part of our nation's defense as are our Soldiers. And they deserve as much praise and thanks as the rest of us can muster.

So now that you know a little more about what a Family Readiness Group does and who the people are that support it, perhaps you'll consider joining if you're not already a member.

It does take time, there's no getting around it. But the rewards in information and sense of connection make the effort well worth it.

And if you are a family member reading this, you know that you already support your Soldier in so many ways. But being an FRG member helps



1st Lt. Michelle Lunato

you to provide even better support, especially during deployments.

One comment I make to Soldiers every time I can is that it is not a matter of if you will be deployed, but a matter of when you will be deployed.

That fact makes Family Readiness Groups even more crucial to our effort.

As many of you know, I just returned from a one-year deployment to Kuwait. While there I continually received emails, letters, and (most importantly to me and the Soldiers) those care packages of candy, cookies and other

sweet treats. Most of the time I didn't even know the sender.

Yes, we had two large post exchanges at Camp Arifjan, but there was something special about getting those boxes of good things to eat. It made us know that people we didn't even know cared about us and what we were doing.

That kind of support, like Family Readiness Group support, makes all the difference in the world to our eventual success. Thanks to all of you for what you do.

ARMY STRONG!

## Traditional

*Continued from Page 15*

still stops and bothers me every now and then. But she does know how to open the canned food, so she can stay for that reason alone.

Things you know don't know about my mom – She used to play her music WAY too loud, but since I haven't been able to hear for a year or so it doesn't bother me like it used to. Tell me, who places Toby Keith, Jimmy Buffett, AC/DC and Heart in the same play list? Does that even make sense?

She also loves baseball and I have to watch in on TV with her. Actually, I don't understand it all. You humans make zero sense, but she does stay home with me and I love that. Other than that she doesn't watch TV unless it is SportsCenter or "Dancing with the Stars."

She believes you can learn so much about a person by the way they dance. GreatGrands (Gene and Harriette) were

the best dancers; I got to watch them only once before GreatGraps died. They were SO great together; maybe that was why they were together SO long.

Well, Mom told me that this issue of Bolt is about Family readiness. That being said, I figured that this would be my best chance to be published or even be asked to write about something, so I took it. I am actually here to remind folks that single Soldiers have families too.

I have a Grandma-Sharon (though she is a dog person, she stills likes me) and Uncle Joe and Aunt Diane – they LOVE me. They love all four legged kids (they have two dogs and three cats). Mom says that their support is real important because she couldn't do it without them. Grandma Sharon and Uncle Joe came to a family day when Mom was assigned to a unit in Chico, but it's a lot harder now that we live in Georgia. I liked California a lot better

– it was better for my fur.

So I help my Mom the best I can, I am here for her upon her return and I don't judge (as long as she feeds me), so I guess that is what family readiness is to me. She has a plan to ensure that the house payment, the "Cat/House" sitter and a full pantry of cat food is provided. Catnip is just a plus.

Mom says that my words here have wandered, I say whatever. Look, family readiness is EVERYTHING! I know what a long weekend is when I spend it alone. Then after she finally gets home, she has to go to work just 10 hours later. It sucks!

But she is my Mom and she does a great job at that, so sort of forgive her. I would rather that she was home all time; but no, I probably wouldn't, I really wouldn't know how that works. I don't understand politics or that stuff, but I do know my Mom. She is the best and if she hangs out with you – then you MUST be THE BEST.

Thanks. You make my Mom very proud.

**Murphy Brown**

CAT, child of Command Sgt. Major

*I am actually here to remind folks that single Soldiers have families too.*



