



Ready Families... Anytime, Anywhere

BUCKEYE FAMILIES

JUNE 2006

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* Denotes: Volunteer – Joint Family Council Member

**From the
State Family Program Director**

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Bramlish

First, I would like to thank all those that participated in our Annual Family Readiness Conference. We had over 600 participants and a great weekend. Our goal in family readiness is "Ready Families... Anytime, Anywhere."

This simply means that our program helps our military members by ensuring that their families understand our military missions (Global War on Terror and support to our nation and communities as in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita), understands the way we mobilize and the many resources available to our families.

This brings me to what is currently on our planning agenda - the potential for a pandemic predicated by the avian flu. You have likely heard much about this in the news. The Ohio National Guard is an important part of the State of Ohio's plan to support government services should we experience an outbreak of this flu. The Ohio Department of Health is working on preparations for a pandemic in Ohio and states that "experts believe a worldwide outbreak, or pandemic, of influenza will happen someday. The exact timing is not known, but it is certain our everyday lives will drastically change during a pandemic. These events may include temporary closing of schools, or cancellation of events, disruption of normal services such as utilities..."

The important thing to note is there are things you can do NOW to lessen the impact on your family should we experience a pandemic. When preparing for a possible emergency situation such as the pandemic influenza, it's best to think first about the basics of survival. First, STOCKPILE emergency items: water, nonperishable food, prescription medications as possible, soap, alcohol-based sanitizer, tissues and specific needs of infants or children. Second, RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE, currently the H5N1 virus (bird flu) cannot be easily passed from human to human, but make respiratory etiquette a habit now: cover nose and mouth with tissue when sneezing and throw away tissue, sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve rather than your hand, try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth as germs spread easily

this way, and wash hands often. Third, PRACTICE GOOD HEALTH HABITS, simply means keeping yourself healthy with appropriate rest, nutrition, and exercise.

Forth, GET INFORMED, visit

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov> or

<http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov/families/families.htm>

which has great checklists and information on this evolving worldwide issue.

My personal thoughts on this are simple; pandemics happen in cycles and one will hit the US in time. Take the time to understand the needs of your household and take action to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. I am buying extra hand sanitizer & soap, food and bottled water and those things for my family to be self sufficient should this hit our great land. I am also preparing my personal situation by ensuring my family and I discuss what to do if school is closed and both my wife and I are expected to work (childcare) etc. The Ohio National Guard's likely mission in the event of a pandemic will be to transport medicines, protect or secure facilities that are vital to the public and basically assist the state in maintaining critical human services. If this emergency happens, you can count on the guard to come to the aid of its citizens; and those of you that are family of our Guardsmen, you will likely be better informed than your neighbors on the pandemic as the TAG and our senior leadership is committed to keeping Guardsmen, Civilian employees and their families informed.

We will continue to pass information to our families through family readiness communication channels. I need all of you to ensure that all our members have completed Privacy Act Statements (PAS) which are what we use to generate phone trees to pass information when other communication venues are impractical or insufficient. Have your military member contact his or her unit to update their PAS if needed. A copy of the PAS is on our family program website.

Annual State Family Readiness Conference **a Huge Success!**

Submitted by Jennifer Moore

Line Dancing, Horse Races, "Jail Bird General Kambic", great food, and a special appearance by none other than "The Man in Black"; these are just a few of the sites and sounds heard this year on opening night of the Annual Family Readiness Conference held on 7-9 April. With record attendance of over 575 people, this year was one of the best ever according to surveys collected at the end of the conference! (survey results are posted on our website)

The conference touched on a number of topics in the breakout session including FRGL Orientation, Personal

Safety, Financial Planning, VA Benefits, Reenergizing Your FRG, just to name a few. We had terrific participation from our Commanders and Military Liaisons along with their FRGL Leader Teams.

A Town Hall Meeting was held at the closing general session with Army and Air Senior Leadership as well as State Council Members answering questions from conference participants. According to State Family Program Director LTC Bramlish, the Town Hall Q & A should be posted on our website within the next few weeks.

During the Adjutant General's Annual Family Readiness Awards Presentation, the following were 2006 Award recipients:

FSG of the Year – 200th Red Horse Squadron

Commander of the Year – CPT Aaron Vaubel, 641st QM Det (Water Purification)

Military Liaison of the Year – MSgt Maryanne Jankowski, 200th Red Horse Squadron

Family of the Year – Air – CMSgt Donald & Darla Dutridge Family, 180th Fighter Wing/Civil Engineering Squadron

Family of the Year – Army – SSG Joseph & Tina Fulk Family, 211th Maintenance Co

Volunteer of the Year – Susannah "Susie" Charlton, 200th Red Horse Squadron

Please join us in congratulating this years award winners.

BE ALERT!

Chaplain Ken Daft
JFHQ-OH State Chaplain

The issue of suicide is always of great concern to our Ohio National Guard families. And although the military to include our Guard families has a lower rate of suicide, we need to remain on guard for those soldiers and airmen who make seek to harm themselves. Two important trends to watch for are depression and a loss of hope. If you happen to notice someone who is struggling with these, it's a good idea to ask, "Have you ever thought about harming yourself?" or words to that effect. If the response is "yes" then you will want to stay with the person and seek immediate help. Be sure to remind them that suicide is a "permanent solution" to a temporary problem. The following telephone number is a suicide prevention hotline 1-800-784-2433. Also MilitaryOneSource is available 24/7 at 1-800-342-9647.

ARMY Communities of Excellence (ACOE) **Program and Award**

Submitted by Larry Hale

The Army Communities of Excellence Program encourages and rewards outstanding installations' journey

to excellence in installation management. The Army Communities of Excellence Award honors the three top Army Installations, along with special category winners that have achieved high levels of excellence in building a high quality environment, outstanding facilities, and superior services.

There were two Award ceremonies held 3-4 May 2006: 40 members of the Ohio Army National Guard command staff and writing team attended these ceremonies in Washington, DC. The National Guard/Reserve Award was presented at the National Guard Readiness Center, in Arlington VA. The Ohio Army National Guard finished as: "All Around Winner" (amongst 22 other Guard, Reserve and Special Category entrants) in the Guard/Reserve Competition. An engraved crystal Trophy of Excellence and an ACOE flag were presented to the team.

The Ohio Army National Guard was also selected as a Special Category Winner at the Chief of Staff of the Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) competition for 2006 as well. MG Wayt and BG Kambic received this special award at the Pentagon from Under Secretary of Defense Pete Geren. An etched Silver Cup of Excellence attached to a Walnut base, a White and Gold DA ACOE Flag and a check for \$750,000.00 was presented to the team. It was great accomplishment for the OHARNG journey to Excellence, our Readiness posture and our organizational alignment...

Bill Introduced to Reduce Reserve Retirement Age

H.R.783 has been introduced to reduce the age for military retired pay eligibility from 60 to 55 for members of the Reserves and National Guard. The bill would lower the retirement age for those who have served at least 20 years to begin to draw their retirement pay at age 55. Active duty forces have no age restrictions once their 20 years of service is complete. Members of the National Guard and the reservists in the Navy, Coast Guard, Army, Marine and Air Force, would qualify at age 55 for retirement pay based on individual participation in the retirement plan. This bill has been introduced to help compensate Reserve and Guard members for their expanding role in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

How do you feel about this action? Let your public officials know how you feel!

<http://capwiz.com/military/issues/alert/?alertid=8732796&type=CO>

Nominations being accepted for "Support the Guard" campaign

Jackson Hewitt has initiated a "Support the Guard" campaign that will run until Dec. 16, 2006. Soldiers, families and employers can be nominated as "Heroes of the Year" for the Army National Guard.

To enter, visit www.supporttheguard.com and complete the contest entry form. Compose an essay of 500 words or less that explains why and how your nominated soldier, family and/or employer supports the Army National Guard.

The 30 prize-winning essays – one in each category in March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December – will be entered for a chance to win the grand prize: a two-day trip to Fontana, Calif., in and tickets a 2007 NASCAR Nextel Cup Series race for both the winning "Hero" and the entrant who nominated the winner (one winner in each category).

More information on the "Support the Guard" campaign – including official rules and eligibility requirements – can be found at www.supporttheguard.com.



From the FRG Tool Box

Supporting Service Members... Supporting Families

The Department of Veterans Affairs OEF/OIF Seamless Transition Outreach Team provide an important function to ensure service members returning from theatre are informed about their benefits. The OEF/OIF outreach team members can also provide briefings to Family Readiness groups about how to access benefits including eligibility criteria.

Members of the OEF/OIF outreach team are licensed social workers who can help educate families about what to expect when service members transition home and self care family suggestions. The outreach team can also address issues including how traumatic stress reactions can affect families and the important role of families in recovery. Families can learn what mental health support services are available to them and how easy it is to access those.

Listed are the OEF/OIF points of contact in the state who can be contacted:

Chillicothe VA Medical Center: Annette Damico 740-772-7020

Columbus VA: Kay Adams 614-257-5695

Dayton VA: Leon Lacy: 937-268-6511 Ext. 2876
Cleveland VA: Tammy Thomas: 440-526-3030 Ext. 7500
Cincinnati VA: Karen Cutright: 513-470-9054

National Guard Veterans State Benefits Advisor Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Guard Bureau have teamed up to improve coordination of veterans benefits at the state level by creating 54 State Benefits Advisor (SBA) positions. The new National Guard SBAs will help ensure a smooth and seamless transition for Guard members returning from active duty deployments. They are recently returned veterans who have graduated from a special training program at the Veterans Benefits Academy in Baltimore. They will assist returning combat veterans and create coalitions between state veterans affairs offices, veteran's service organizations, VA and community groups. They will participate in the Reserve and National Guard mobilization and demobilization process and provide materials on VA benefits, compensation, education, vocational rehabilitation, life insurance, home loans, and burial benefits. **Our State Benefit Advisor for Ohio is Terry Dean. Terry can be reached by phone at 614-336-7349 or 800-589-9914 and by email at terry.w.dean@oh.ngb.army.mil**

Military Members get Free Admission to Cincinnati Reds Games

State Benefit Advisor Terry Dean announced this week that all military members are eligible for free admission to all home Cincinnati Red's baseball games every Monday through Thursday. There is an assigned area for our military members. Simply show your military ID upon admission and enjoy the game!

Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents (2006 Edition)

Below is the link for the electronic version of the DVA "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents (2006 Edition)" for your information, review, and use.

http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.asp

Great News for Veterans

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214 online:
[_http://vetrecs.archives.gov/_](http://vetrecs.archives.gov/)
(<http://vetrecs.archives.gov/>).

This will cut the waiting time veterans have had in the past waiting for copies of their DD 214s and will be particularly helpful when they need a copy of their DD-214 for employment purposes.

Regional Training Workshops Scheduled

This program provides great baseline guidance on establishing, maintaining and operating Family Readiness Groups (FRG) at a unit level. Our Regional Training Program has been revamped and updated to meet the needs of our units today. This one day training event was developed in conjunction with our joint Family Readiness Council. You will find that in most incidences, the information provided applies or is aligned with both Army and Air Guard Family Readiness Programs. We are very excited about the new training information and although family readiness "tenants" have not changed, how we support and execute our FRGs has really evolved over the last few years. One great improvement is the inclusion of commanders and military liaisons in the training. Recall that the intended audience for Regional Training includes: unit FRG Leader (Key Volunteer), assistant, secretary, treasurer, commander and military liaison.

There are 2 more sessions available this year: August 5th in the Akron Canton area and August 12th in Chillicothe. You can obtain a reservation form on our family program website or call your local FR staff member. There will be 10 additional sessions offered in 2007 at different locations throughout the state. Those dates will be released soon. Finally, on the Army Guard side, we are asking ALL FRGLs at a minimum, attend this new program regardless of whether or not they attended a Regional Training workshop in the past. Army Commanders and Military Liaison's will also be required to attend this training prior to the end of the 2007 training year. For information contact your local FR staff member. Military members and key volunteers should make every effort to try to attend this training together.

Fund Raising Restrictions

Submitted by: LTC Robert Bramlish

I have not yet completed the policy letter describing FRGs and Fund Raising Rules. I apologize for the delay and will get info out soon. If you are a deployed or deploying unit and need assistance now, call me direct.

We Need Volunteers!

There is a real need for volunteers to assist in various projects in the Family Programs office at Beightler Armory. If you are a Columbus local and can spare 4 to 8 hours once a week to make a difference, please call **Sue Ann Carroll**

KID'S KORNER

Ohio National Guard Youth Program Ohio National Guard Youth Program

The Ohio National Guard Youth Program has kicked into overdrive! After another successful Family Readiness Conference where we had **91** youth for the weekend we are very excited to leap into our second year of programming!

I am constantly looking for ways to reach more youth. Any suggestions or great ideas of how to market to our Youth are **WELCOME!**. Please feel free to contact me with any ideas or suggestions.

If you were fortunate enough to attend the Conference you probably remember LTC Bramlish making an announcement about the Youth Program forming a Steering Committee. I had several folks contact me that weekend about getting involved! I have scheduled the first Steering Committee meeting for **June 16, 2006**. The location for the meeting will be here at Beightler Armory in Columbus. If you are interested in attending this meeting please contact me and I will provide you with all the necessary details. This Steering Committee will have representatives from all over the state broken up in the same regional format as our Family Assistance Centers to include both Army and Air volunteers. If you or someone you know has a great passion for Youth Programs please contact me or your local Family Assistant Coordinator as soon as possible. If you are not local to Columbus, I may be able to phone conference you into the meeting.

Sesame Street Teaches Coping Skills

This July, Elmo and his red, fuzzy father will star this summer in an effort to teach young military children and their caregivers how best to handle a parent's deployment in a program called "Talk, Listen, Connect: Helping Families Cope with Military Deployment." Sesame Workshop, the makers of Sesame Street, will launch the program as a DVD kit. Performed in English and Spanish, it will not air on television but will be distributed free to schools, childcare programs and family support centers, thanks to a gift from Wal-Mart stores and other sponsors. The kit covers all phases of deployment -- from pre-deployment to homecoming -- and the unique challenges each phase poses.

Upcoming events: Ohio National Guard Youth Program

Saturday, June 24, 2006 Summer Fun at the Cincinnati Zoo! Here is another FAMILY FUN Event for our Military Families!!!

Highlights of the day "just" for our Military Families

- Free Admission for the first 200 people thru the gates!
- After the first 200 the Cincinnati Zoo will offer \$6.00 tickets for Military Members and their families for the rest of the day!
- **Please Bring your Military ID and a copy of the attached flier, so you will have the Discount code #30956 or tell them at the gate that you are with "Operation: Military Kids and they can look it up!**
- Free refreshments available for our Military families located in the "Cool Zone" from 12 noon to 6pm (Kilimanjaro Shelter area)
- Free "Summer Fun" Family photo at the Cool Zone
- "Cool Zone" activities to include a "Scavenger Hunt" (for those interested)



Operation: Military Kids Camp @ Kelley's Island! August 15-19, 2006. Ages: 9 – 13 or Operation: Military Kids Camp @ 4H Camp Whitewood! July 23-27, 2006. Ages 13-16. If you were able to attend our weekend camp last year then you know firsthand what a great opportunity is. We have lots of educational and FUN activities in store for this week long camp. This camp will be open to dependants of any National Guard or Reserve (any branch) first priority will go to currently deployed service members dependents. **Cost: \$35 per camper! WOW!!! What a DEAL!!** The packets are out and can be downloaded from www.ohio4h.org/military . We still have **80** slots available at Kellys Island and **50** at Camp Whitewood! So tell every military family you know about this great opportunity! If you have any questions about any of the opportunities that you have read about please contact **YOUR Youth Coordinator, Sue Ann Carroll @ 877-460-2177 or email sue.ann.carroll@oh.ngb.army.mil**