Joint effort

Marines, civilians take advantage of MUTC's close quarters.

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Just like Dad

Three kids follow their Dad into military by joining Indiana Guard.

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THE CRIER

CAMP ATTERBURY & MUSCATATUCK URBAN TRAINING CENTER

NOVEMBER 2009

FREE

VISITORS' DAY

MUTC open house gives public look at premier training site

CRIER PHOTOS BY SPC. JOHN CROSBY

Above: Children surround Sgt. Scott Royer as he shows off a goat used as a training aid for Soldiers preparing for mobilizations to Iraq and Afghanistan, during Muscatatuck Urban Training Center's first open house in Butlerville. **Right**: Sgt. Nicholas Adams paints a boy's face during the open house.

By Spc. John Crosby
CRIER STAFF WRITER

Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, the Army's premier urban warfare training site in Butlerville, held its first open house recently to familiarize the locals in the surrounding areas to the post and its operations.

Loud noises, explosions and frequent helicopter traffic are all common to the citizens of the communities surrounding MUTC as a result of new construction, training and daily operations. Peaking interest and inquiries as to how the Army is using the former Muscatatuck State Developmental Center led officials to the idea for the open house.

"We want to bring the public in and show them what it is we do on a day-to-day basis," said MUTC commander Lt. Col. Chris Kelsey in a previous interview. "We want the people of the local area to see what we have built and why we have built it … get a feel for why we're here."

More than 800 people came out for the event and participated in the walking and driving tours, a petting zoo, paintball target practice, weapons and vehicle displays, face painting and more. Free hot dogs and soft drinks were also available.

The large turnout included curious enthusiasts, concerned citizens and military families and friends.

"It's interesting to see our tax dollars at work," said North Vernon resident Alan Morrison. "It looks like a world-class facility to me. The density of the buildings is something that is hard to find in other shanty towns in other training camps, so it looks like you have enough buildings and infrastructure

(SEE **VISITORS**, PAGE 3)

The Crier

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PHOTO BY SGT. ALEXANDER SNYDER/3RD SUSTAINMENT COMMAND

Iraqi Army officers and officials from the 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) tour a maintenance facility run by the 776th Maintenance Company at Camp Taji, Iraq, June 23. The tour was part of a meeting between 3rd ESC officials and Iraqi commanders designed to aid Iraqis in developing their supply system.

Tennessee National Guard maintenance company homeward bound from Iraq

By 1st Lt. Jessica Halladay
CRIER STAFF WRITER

Soldiers of the 776th and 771st Maintenance Companies loaded up for one more mission recently, but this time the destination is home to Elizabethton, Tenn. Soldiers from the 776th and the 771st provided direct support maintenance during their year-long deployment at Camp Taji, Iraq.

Capt. Stacey Kunz, commander of the 776th, said the unit completed approximately 3,300 job orders and supported 72 customer units with about 25,000 labor man hours, which played a vital role in the upkeep of the units conducting missions outside the wire.

"We also improved the overall combat rating in safety for thousands of troops that were engaged in combat missions," Kunz said.

Kunz said within 45 days of being on ground at Camp Taji, other units knew who to come to when they needed help and received great praise for their excellent standards in work habits.

"I am very proud of the men and women who conducted our mission," Kunz said.

The 776th was also responsible for training Iraqi soldiers in part of the Logistical Training Advisory Team.

Sgt. Brian Aikins said the team trained Iraqi soldiers on ordering supplies, safety procedures and how to conduct proper quality assurance quality control, a key factor to help sustain operations in transportation. Aikins said he enjoyed getting to share and use his skills with the Iraqi soldiers.

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. WILL HILL

Sgt. Lenell Applewhite, the Soldier in charge of Immunizations at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, gives Sgt. Rodney Hunt a shot during out-processing for the 776th and 771st Maintenance Companies their year-long deployment at Camp Taji, Iraq.

"We interacted with them on a daily basis and enjoyed drinking chai with the soldiers, which allowed us to take part in their traditions as well," Aikins said.

Aikins, who lives in New York, intends to stay with the 776th and make the monthly drive from Tennessee for battle assembly. He doesn't want to give up that bond that comes with deploying together. For him, it's worth it.

"I felt proud of my leadership and I could always count on them if needed," Aikins said. "We always knew we would be taken care of."

Atterbury welcomes back the 189th and 157th

Col. Steven M. Merkel

Commander's Message

The holiday season is fast approaching; however, this is not a time to forget all of the planning that must take place prior to the arrival of both Task Force Phoenix and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (*PRT*).

Task Force Phoenix and the PRTs, with 3,000 plus Soldiers, are arriving this month to receive post mobilization training prior to deploying to Afghanistan.

Please join us in welcoming back the 189th Infantry Brigade from Fort Bragg, N.C., and the 157th Infantry Brigade from Fort Jackson, S.C. The 189th Infantry Brigade and the 157th Infantry Brigade are the lead training brigades for the PRTs and Task Force Phoenix, respectively.

Coming off of a highly successful KFOR 12 rotation, I am expecting the same outstanding training, support and leader development this month.

This Veterans Day, 12:30 p.m. Nov. 11, there will be a wreath-laying ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Parkway sign in Columbus, located at the U.S. 31 and Washington Street intersection. All are welcome.

With this in mind, remember to remain safe while having fun. Eat your fill of turkey and stuffing during Thanksgiving, but bring your turkey pants so you have enough room at the waist. Watch out for hypercompetitive shoppers when conducting your Christmas shopping the next day. And as always, if you choose to drink, please do so responsibly.

Always remember with the holidays comes the cold weather; this means watching how you dress. Stay warm, but not too warm; especially, if you are doing a lot of outdoor physical activity. Be sure to allocate extra time in the morning to scrape the windshield, and drive at speeds that match the weather. Watch the roads, as ice and snow will affect your driving.

To this end, watch yourself and make sure you are doing the right thing: take appropriate safety precautions and make smart decisions when you take the time to have some fun.

I want all of you to enjoy the holidays with your families, but I also want to ensure you will come back ready for the upcoming missions.

Col. Steven M. Merkel is the commander of the 205th Infantry Brigade at Camp Atterbury.

✦Visitors

(FROM PAGE 1)

here to provide that next level of realism that is difficult to fabricate."

Even former employees of the old Muscatatuck State Developmental Center came to see the changes and new additions to the facilities.

"I've worked at Muscatatuck here for 40 years," Mamie Erickson said. "It's great that this facility is now offering this for our U.S. servicemen. The program is still beginning, but you can see a big difference. I think this program will get better and better over time. It's just awe inspiring."

Kelsey said he plans to hold more open house events in the future as more construction, modifications and additions are made to MUTC.

"It's a partnership," Kelsey said. "We can't exist unless we co-exist with the local community. We're trying to exist in harmony. There have been some complaints about the noise and the aircraft, so we wanted to open it up and show what we do; give them an understanding of what we do and that it's safe."

For more information about MUTC, visit http://www.mutc.in.ng.mil/

CRIER PHOTOS BY SPC. JOHN CROSBY

Nicholas Brown fires an M4 assault rifle modified into a paintball gun during Muscatatuck Urban Training Center's first open house in Butlerville.

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Wyss showcases MUTC

By Staff Sgt. Brad Staggs
CRIER STAFF WRITER

Sen. Tom Wyss (R-Fort Wayne) tried to explain to his fellow senators from other states what Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in southern Indiana was all about, but he failed to give them the full scope of the project.

"When I'd sit at task force meetings, I'd always explain what we were doing at (Camp) Atterbury and they understood about mobilization and demobilization," Wyss explained. "But I could never really get across to them what Muscatatuck was. I explained it, but until they saw it today, they're fascinated. They just can't believe what this is already after this few short years that it's been in existence."

Wyss was in Indianapolis co-chairing the National Conference of State Legislatures Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Task Force when the thought struck him that while he had senators from other states in Indiana, he would bring them to Muscatatuck in order to show them exactly what the military facility was doing.

On Sept. 26, Wyss brought state representatives from Nevada, Connecticut, Idaho, Minnesota, Florida, Texas and Michigan to MUTC to give them a first-hand look at what he had been talking about.

The senators were briefed on the past, present and future operations of the facility by the Indiana State Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, and Brig. Gen. Clif Tooley, the Assistant Adjutant General and commander of the Camp Atterbury-Muscatatuck Center for Complex Operations, which oversees activity at the two southern Indiana military facilities.

Following lunch at the military cafeteria, the group toured Muscatatuck, and observed military and civilian first responders training in an urban terrain. For most, it was a first look at the Army's latest urban training facility. For Wyss, it was a return.

"It's been two years since I've been here and all I can say is 'Wow' is an understatement," Wyss exclaimed. "It's fantastic, it really is. I saw what we had, I saw the potential, but even today it fascinates me with what it's accomplished so far."

CRIER PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. BRAD STAGGS

Tom Wyss (R-Fort Wayne) leaves the Power House during a visit to Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Butlerville.

MUTC began its military life as a mental facility before being shut down by the state of Indiana. Many buildings on the site had been deemed of historical value, since they were built between 1935 and 1950 in the aftermath of the Great Depression and World War II. The state was prepared to spend up to $35 million to tear the buildings down and create a tree farm out of the land.

If that plan had gone forward, not only would the military facility not be available for training, but jobs

(SEE **WYSS**, PAGE 8)

Inspirational moment

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Thank you, thank you, thank you! It cannot be said enough! But to whom? Service men and women? Veterans of wars past? Taxpayers? Founders of our country? Leif Ericson? Native Americans? To whom do we say thank you for the bounty that consistently sustains us? There is none greater than Almighty God. Thank you dear God for the richness of the multitude of blessings which come forth from thy might. Your love is immensely evident through the ages.

— CH (Maj.) Douglas E. Brown, assistant chaplain

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Amendment calls for continued support for National Guard site

By T.D. Jackson
CRIER STAFF WRITER

Thanks in part to a revelatory visit to Muscatatuck Urban Training Center by Sen. Ted Kaufman (D-Del.), the U.S. Senate agreed Oct.1 to Kaufman's amendment to the 2009 Defense Appropriations Bill, which will ensure continued support for integrated civilian-military training for all civilians deploying to Afghanistan from Camp Atterbury.

"Long-term support for integrated civilian-military training will put MUTC and Camp Atterbury on the map with a unique mission that is best performed by the National Guard," said Lt. Col. Chester Guyer, commander of the Observer Controller Battalion at Muscatatuck.

"This is a tremendous first step," Guyer said. "I hope the full Congress will pass this legislation and provide clear direction on providing funding support for this kind of training."

Kaufman visited Muscatatuck, a sub-installation of Camp Atterbury, on Sept. 28 to observe civilian-military training scenarios that simulate real-life experiences in Afghanistan.

"Now that civilians are an integral part of the counter-insurgency strategy, this training is absolutely essential," Kaufman said during his visit.

Muscatatuck is a premier training facility that hosts training for government, public and private entities and is the only training center for civilians deploying to Afghanistan. Just as recently as July, Muscatatuck began the integration of civilian-military operations. Deploying civilians undergo a week-long intensive training regimen to include combat lifesaving, cultural awareness, weapons and equipment familiarization and tactics training.

CRIER PHOTO BY MAJ. LISA KOPCZYNSKI

U.S. Sen. Ted Kaufman (D-Del.) (standing, second from right) watches a conversation between Afghan role players and members of the civilian-military training class at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center on Sept. 28. Kaufman was joined by officials from the U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Defense and Department of State, including an official from the State Department's Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (under the leadership of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke), to observe civilian-military training vignettes.

The availability of this integrated civilian-military training recently changed from once every nine months to once every month, which means civilians don't have to wait so long to get spun up on military practices before heading out the door.

"We spend a lot of time training the troops — which is great. It's given us the best military in the entire world and we gotta do the same thing with the civilians," Kaufman said.

Guyer said he believed everyone appreciated the senator's interest in their training.

"The Soldiers and government civilians were very impressed with the senator's concern for proper training prior to deployment into hostile environments," Guyer said. "I believe the senator was also impressed with the quality of training being received by the civilians and Soldiers in the integrated exercise."

And he was.

"I was impressed first by the facilities … the fact that they have gotten things up and running as quickly as they have," Kaufman said. "Second, by the people they have doing the training. They're excellent. And, of course, by the people that are going to Afghanistan," he said.

Kaufman said the amendment will ensure that the training at Camp Atterbury continues to receive the support it needs in terms of military and civilian personnel, trainers and other resources.

"The folks here are doing a great job of getting this thing up and running in record time," Kaufman said.

"We're going to build this up," Kaufman said. "We have to do a lot more. Every house is as good as its foundation and having a foundation like this is gonna make the whole thing go a lot easier."

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Marines and civilians train side by side in MUTC's close quarters

By Staff Sgt. Brad Staggs
CRIER STAFF WRITER

Muscatatuck Urban Training Center encompasses only 1,000 total acres, including a 180-acre reservoir. This translates to just over 1.5 square miles of land and water for military training.

Recently, more than 500 Marines from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit found themselves sharing space with civilians from the U.S. State Department's Provincial Reconstruction Team, creating a training opportunity neither expected until they got together.

The PRT training focuses on teaching civilian employees from the U.S. State Department, Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development how to live and work in Afghanistan. They spend four weeks training for their Afghanistan assignments with the final week of the training taking place at Muscatatuck.

While in Afghanistan, the civilians will interact with all branches of the military. During their class in October, they were about to work with the Army and Marines.

CRIER PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. BRAD STAGGS

A Marine with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit secures the perimeter while his comrades interact with "locals" during Realistic Urban Training at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center.

Jim McKellar, of the McKellar Group and project manager for the PRT training, thinks that integrating everybody on-site into the training really helps all those who will be working together in Afghanistan.

"I think it's easy to integrate the military units here because they're focused on the same mission, that being successful in Afghanistan," McKellar said.

"Therefore, it's very easy to integrate the civilians into the military staffs since they're focused on the same mission that the president laid out for us."

Marines from the 24th MEU provided realistic scenarios for the PRT training, such as guarding the mock embassy that the civilians had to enter and roadways they had to traverse. The PRT members were also able to sit in on Marine briefings and see first-hand how what they do affects the Marines in country.

Elizabeth Rood, director of the Stability Operations Division for the U.S. State Department's Foreign Service Institute, saw a lot of value in the interagency training, even at times when it wasn't as coordinated as everybody thought.

"There were some cases that the Marines were in a facility that we were intending to use," Rood said. "The PRT or another civilian group might be going out to meet people and discover that there is a maneuver unit already doing something there that wasn't a planned encounter. So it's not a bad thing that these movements are going on simultaneously."

Purdue and Indiana universities also take part in the PRT training, providing important information on Afghan farming techniques and training the interagency civilians on what to expect once they arrive in country.

Working together in a small space is one of the hallmarks of urban training and Muscatatuck helps military and civilian entities work together to achieve a common goal.

Kids follow father into military service, soon to outrank him

By Sgt. Robert G. Cooper III
CRIER STAFF WRITER

It's not uncommon to find Soldiers who have made the commitment to lifelong Army service. From officers to enlisted, walking the military career path offers a wide range of benefits for both the individual and his or her family.

For some Soldiers, however, the Army is more than just a career move; it is an extension of their families.

Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Chow is one such Soldier, having served more than 33 years with the Army and raised three children — each of whom is a member of the Indiana National Guard.

Chow joined the Army Reserve in 1976 and served until 1986, when he joined the Active Guard Reserve program and began serving full-time.

From coast to coast and post to post, Chow never imagined his kids would follow in his footsteps. Chow said that he never suggested military service to his children, instead echoing his wife's sentiments for them to attend college and enter the work force.

Despite his parents' suggestions for academia, Philemon Chow, the eldest child, decided to serve as a way to hold himself "to higher standards."

"I didn't know what to do in terms of a career, so I tried out the Indiana National Guard," Philemon Chow said. "Obviously, my father was in the military, and (his service) was always in the back of my mind.

"Initially, I really didn't think that much about it and my father didn't push it. But I wanted to try something different, and I found the National Guard would give me an opportunity to try different things," Chow added.

Andrew Chow was surprised when he heard Philemon — then his other children — decided to join.

"I was shocked when Philemon joined," he said. "I guess Philemon is the motivator of the kids. There's always one who is the motivator of the group, so he got his sister to join in. Right after that, the youngest one joined in, too. They're all satisfied with their service and have adjusted well to

(SEE **FATHER**, PAGE 9)

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. ROBERT G. COOPER III

Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Chow, a personnel Soldier with the 205th Infantry Brigade at Camp Atterbury, holds up a photo of his children, who all serve in the Indiana National Guard. Pictured (left to right) are 1st Lt. Petrina Chow, 28, Officer Candidate Philemon Chow, 26, and Spc. Philip Chow, 22.

✦Wyss

(FROM PAGE 4)

would have been lost to the local residents, as well. Wyss remembers when he first heard of the project from John Hall, the mayor of North Vernon, at the time.

"I went to Japan on a trade mission with the North Vernon mayor and he was so excited about what the potential was. But I don't think even his vision at that time could conceive what it would become or what the potential still is today."

The Indiana National Guard saw an opportunity to create the best urban training venue in the Army inventory — one that would attract users from all branches of the military and every state and country. The plan has worked as military personnel have trained at MUTC from as far away as Slovakia and first responders regularly use the facility to conduct urban training operations.

"I didn't know what to expect," said Connecticut Rep. Stephen D. Dargan (D-West Haven). "But this is amazing. It's good to know that our military has the chance to train in this atmosphere."

By the time the senators left Muscatatuck, they were well aware of what the facility brings to the country's defensive capability. For Wyss, a former Air Force officer who retired after more than 30 years in uniform with the Indiana National Guard, MUTC is a shining moment for the Guard.

"The things that I've seen the Indiana National Guard, both Air and Army, do over these last several years that we've been deployed," Wyss said. "I told the general that I've never been prouder to have worn the uniform of an Indiana National Guardsman."

Fall Freedom Run

CRIER PHOTOS BY SPC. JOHN CROSBY

Soldiers, family and friends ran together during the Fall Freedom Run at Camp Atterbury on Oct. 9 to raise funds in support of the 219th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's Family Readiness Group. Family readiness groups are in place to support the families of Soldiers by providing aid, moral support and social events. **Above:** Participants of the 5K Fall Freedom Run round the corner. **Right:** Sgt. Mollie Pitz, a military police Soldier in the 38th Military Police Company of the Indiana National Guard, ties her shoe before the run. **Far right:** Spc. Brian Mahan, an infantryman in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 152nd Long Range Surveyors, is first to cross the finish line.

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High school students take extreme field trip to Atterbury

By 1st Lt. Kyle Key
CRIER STAFF WRITER

High school students from the National Guard Patriot Academy took a break from the books and embarked on their first field training exercise at the ranges at Camp Atterbury in October.

The students, who were once high school dropouts, joined the military under the National Guard's new program to give deserving applicants a second chance to receive their high school diploma, become more proficient Soldiers and give back to the community.

"This was not your ordinary high school field trip," said Patriot Academy Commandant Col. Perry W. Sarver Jr. "Our student-Soldiers have opportunities within the academic year to visit museums, attend collegiate and professional sports events. But this weekend was a little reminder that they are also being trained to be the best Soldiers in the Army National Guard."

Students arrived at Camp Atterbury and marched in full battle gear to the training range.

Student Platoon Sergeant Pfc. Ryan Grieger from Delta, Colo., occupied the range and ordered his squad leaders to establish perimeter security while a reconnaissance team prepared to gather intelligence on the enemy.

CRIER PHOTO BY 1ST LT. KYLE KEY

Pvt. Brandon Deal low crawls to capture enemy information during a reconnaissance mission. Students from the Patriot Academy at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center were participating in a field training exercise at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center.

The advance party began movement and arrived at an objective rally point where Pvt. Brandon Deal and fellow squad members crawled through mud and dense vegetation to determine the number of enemy personnel, their activity, as well as the number and types of weapons.

Beyond the tree line, Patriot Academy cadre posed as opposition forces securing a building armed with AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.

Without detection, Deal carefully scribbled down a few notes and returned to the rally point with critical information for his leadership.

"I had to low crawl through the forest floor covered in briars," Deal said. "I thought that was pretty fun. This is way more engaging than a regular high school field trip. I get to do a lot more. I get to have a sense of pride that I'm actually training and learning the skills that I need to defend my country."

Students executed missions throughout the entire field training exercise and were placed in leadership positions to test and sharpen their abilities. Company Commander Capt. Steven Conway of Somerset, Ky., said the training is designed to make Soldiers dependent on their own ability and interdependent on their team.

"As Soldiers progress through the Patriot Academy, they are given more responsibility to lead themselves with limited cadre supervision," Conway said. "The FTX is a good measuring event to see how much the Soldiers have grasped the military training we have provided up to this point at the Academy."

Pfc. Timothy Valley of Jacksonville, Fla., said the training proved their strengths and more importantly, where they needed improvement.

Pvt. Wesley Beck from Fort Wayne said that learning to work as a team is a lesson that must be consistently taught.

"Everything can be planned perfectly, but if it's not executed as a team, everything crumbles."

✦Father

(FROM PAGE 7)

it. I'm very proud of them to have the opportunity to serve their country."

These days, it's the daughter who is the motivator. 1st Lt. Petrina Chow, who is deployed with the 177th Finance Detachment in Afghanistan, decided she would become an officer and persuaded her older brother, Philemon, to do the same.

Now, Officer Candidate Philemon Chow, who serves as an automation non-commissioned officer for the state's Detachment 18 Recruiting and Retention, is at Officer Candidate School.

Philip, who deployed to Iraq in 2008 with Indiana's 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, is the only one who has not attended OCS, but as soon as Petrina and Philemon get him on board, that will complete the circle.

"Pretty soon, they will all outrank me," said Andrew Chow, smiling and shaking his head.

"It's pretty neat," said Chow of his Army offspring. "It's like, Chow, Chow, Chow, Chow!" he said, laughing. "I'm very proud that they're wearing the uniform that I wear."

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Phone: 526-1143

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Atterbury Museum
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Building 613
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MWR Outdoor Recreation Center
Building 328, Fifth Street
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Athletic equipment for golf, basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, football, racquetball, tennis and horseshoes can be checked out. Boats, canoes, barbeque grills and tents available. Use of recreation areas should be scheduled through MWR center.

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Building 611, Gatling Street.
Hours: Daily, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Phone: 526-1140

Subway
Hours: Daily, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Suicide Prevention: Ask, Care, Escort
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Swimming pool
Building 231
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Use of pool for military training or special events should be scheduled through Sgt. Purvis at 526-1149

Troop Medical Clinic
Sick Call Hours: 7-9 a.m. Regular Hours: 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Phone: 526-1120

USO Day Room
Building 230
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Free sodas, snacks and movies.

NCOs of the Month

CRIER PHOTO

For the month of October, Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Maston, Sgt. Justin Henry, Staff Sgt. Latisha Sanders and Staff Sgt. Richard Brown all were chosen as Camp Atterbury's NCOs of the Month. The NCO of the Month is a byproduct of the Army's Year of the NCO recognition ceremony. Each recipient received a plaque, his or her picture hung in the Camp Atterbury Museum, along with a commemorative brick that will be added to Camp Atterbury's World War II Memorial.

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Commentary

Sick and tired of feeling sick and tired? It's time to get in shape

By T.D. Jackson
CRIER STAFF WRITER

No sooner than I assigned a story about flu season, I came down with a cold. Not just the average coughing-and-runny-nose kind of cold, but one complete with fever, chills, headache and congestion.

Lucky me.

So as I lay on my deathbed, wondering what I did to deserve such a wretched condition, it occurred to me that I probably needed to start taking better care of my body. While I don't have any particularly bad habits — like eating fast food everyday — I don't have any good ones either.

I don't exercise regularly, I don't pay attention to what I'm eating and I don't try to supplement any of the nutrients that I miss out on because of my aversion to fresh fruit. It's almost as though I take my body for granted.

But I'm not 20-something anymore. In your 20s, you can eat ice cream for breakfast and think nothing of it. In your 20s, you can forgo a night of sleep and be OK the next day. At 30, if I sleep on the couch, I'll have a crick in my neck for two days. And at 30, a game of any kind — be it baseball, basketball, volleyball, the Wii — needs to be prepared for ahead of time: stretching, taping body parts down (or together), and even popping an aspirin or two in preparation for the pain to come.

> **"For the sake of my health, my sanity and my vanity, I've got to lose more than a 'few pounds.'"**

You would think that as a former Soldier I should know better. Soldiers — and other servicemembers and first responders — are the primary people who need to keep their bodies in tip-top shape. In the blink of an eye on the battlefield, you might have to carry your buddy, which is reason No. 2 to take care of your body: you might become the burden to carry.

The sad part is, it's too easy for me to do better. Multivitamins are a dime-a-dozen and there's a free fitness center on post for Pete's sake! I bring my lunch to work almost every day, so it's not like I don't have the option to pack only one 100-calorie snack instead of three.

So I'm back on the wagon again. I'm not cutting out the sweets or any of that foolishness but I am determined to drag my fat @!$ into the gym twice a week. On top of that, I bought my husband an exercise bike for his birthday and he really believes it's for him.

Baby steps, right?

Think about it: being overweight may affect only you directly, but it most certainly affects your family and friends indirectly. Once, during a cruise, my husband (who I affectionately refer to as "my big guy") and I went to the beach two days in a row. On day one, it was just the two of us who went swimming but on day two, another couple tagged along and all of a sudden, somebody didn't want to go swimming. I don't know who felt sillier; him sitting in the sand fully dressed, or me, the third wheel half-heartedly splashing in the water next to the other two.

In my case, I love playing softball with my friends but I don't do as well as I could because I run out of breath quickly. That short sprint (or speed walk for me) from home plate to first base is a doozy!

Another reason to get with the program is so I can stop hating on my girlfriend. Sometimes I don't like going out with her simply because she can wear skinny jeans and I can't.

Here is the ultimate indirect effect of being "extra curvy:" my brother's fiancée is having a mother of a time finding bridesmaids dresses to cover those double-wides her girls — including me — are dragging.

But all jokes aside, I've got to do something because my body ain't what it used to be. For the sake of my health, my sanity and my vanity, I have got to lose more than a "few pounds." I'm out of shape and I'm tired of making excuses.

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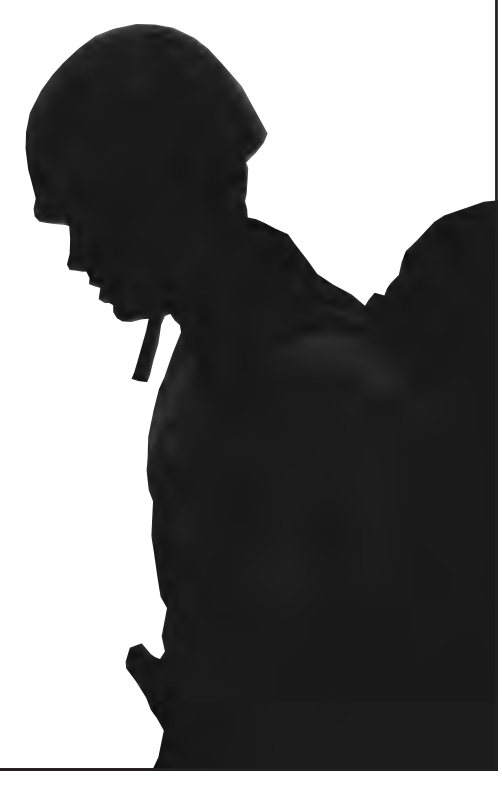

INDIANA TECH | College of Professional Studies

Motivational speaker Silouan Green addresses the audience during his visit to Camp Atterbury for the post chapel's "The Living Room" ministry, a series of events that take place every Wednesday at the chapel.

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. JOSEPH RIVERA REBOLLEDO

The first step to healing

By Spc. Tegan Kucera
CRIER STAFF WRITER

When you come home from work, you usually don't expect there to be a guest in your living room, especially on a weekly basis. If you head over to the post chapel at Camp Atterbury, that's exactly what you'll find in "The Living Room," a ministry series on Wednesday nights that includes music, movies and other entertainment designed to break up the monotony for the training Soldiers.

"The Living Room is geared to reach out to Soldiers in a casual, non-training environment and to break away from routine," said Sgt. 1st Class Norm Black, a trainer with the 3rd Battalion, 338th Regiment, Training Support.

Black has been going to the Living Room since the series started, but a recent Wednesday night was especially moving for him.

The chapel hosted motivational speaker Silouan Green, a former Marine pilot who survived a jet crash in which his instructor/co-pilot died. Green came away with a broken back and other physical and emotional scars.

Green travels from post to post sharing his survival story in the hopes of helping someone.

He lived through the accident, survivors' guilt, the failure of his marriage, letting go the life-long dream of being a Marine and his dependency on painkillers made him consider taking his own life.

"It all began with the descent from 'I'm Mr. Marine' to 'Mr. Nobody,' which is what I would have called myself back then," Green said.

During this time, Green sought the help of a psychiatrist, who helped him take the first step.

"When you're at a point when your world is dark and black, the hardest thing is to take that first step toward something better," Green said.

Green later bought a guitar and started to write songs to help him though the tough times. Once he was discharged from the Marine Corps, he bought a motorcycle and went on a two-year ride that changed his life. It was during this ride that he found his faith and met his second wife. Both changed him and gave him the foundation to rebuild his life.

"Everything that is good in my life came from that trip," he said.

Green now feels he has an obligation to give back to others what his psychiatrist helped him to see — the understanding that life is worth living.

"I felt that if I could make a difference in someone's life, it was an obligation I had to fulfill," Green said.

"It's humbling. I've met the finest, bravest people that I've ever met doing this," he said. "Sometimes I think I get more out of it than I'm giving because I meet such wonderful people."

Black said he appreciates the Wednesday night events because they are geared toward meeting the Soldiers' needs.

"It doesn't matter what your faith is, if any. Everybody can take something away from this," Black said.

Green's message was so well-received that he has been invited back so that more people can hear what he has to say.

Want to join?

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For opportunities with the Operation Warrior Trainer program, contact: (317) 247-3300 ext. 2162.

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