To Kosovo

KFOR 12 trained and ready to go on peace-keeping mission.

Page 6-7

New leaders

NCOs take the oath of office in Camp Atterbury ceremony.

Page 10

Patriot Academy 3
Upcoming events.....2
Commentary 4
MWR.....8
Suicide awareness 9
Franklin College FOCUS.....12

THE CRIER
CAMP ATTERBURY & MUSCATATUCK URBAN TRAINING CENTER
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FREE

A DAY IN THEIR BOOTS

Employers experience Army life at ESGR's Boss Lift

By T.D. Jackson
CRIER STAFF WRITER

As the saying goes, you can't judge a man until you've walked a mile in his shoes. Local employers did just that recently during Camp Atterbury's annual Boss Lift hosted by Indiana's branch of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR.

Since many Indiana organizations employ military members, every year the ESGR invites employers to come to Camp Atterbury and get an up-close view of what their servicemembers encounter when they leave work for training or a deployment.

Originally the concept of the ESGR Boss Lift was to fly the employers in military helicopters around military facilities. But at Camp Atterbury, this has been replaced with hands-on training akin to what Soldiers would go through at any given time in their military careers.

Ashley Reese, of Indiana's ESGR, said the event was definitely a success.

"After seeing this (training) first hand, I feel that the employers started to realize how important their own involvement and support is with their servicemember," Reese said.

"We provide them with a hands-on experience and as much visual information as possible in hopes that they will begin to realize that their support and motivation is key to a successful mission and key to a happy servicemember."

As the sun made its slow ascent into the morning sky, the employers were already geared up for their first mission: conquering the rappel tower. Soldiers instructed the employers on safety practices and then showed them how to tie their ropes into the harnesses that would help them maneuver down the 60-foot wall.

Jennifer Wynn of Eli Lilly and Company said she was nervous at the top of the rappel tower but after a while, she finally decided to go ahead and do it.

"I felt like since I made it this far, I owed it to myself and also

(SEE **BOSS LIFT**, PAGE 5)

CRIER PHOTOS BY T.D. JACKSON

Left: Ashley Reese of Indiana's branch of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve rappels down a 60-foot wall at Camp Atterbury during the installation's Boss Lift, an event where local employers come to Camp Atterbury and get an up-close view of what their military employees encounter when they leave work for training or a deployment. **Above:** David Barrabee of Indiana Department of Homeland Security listens to instructions regarding rifle marksmanship.

The Crier

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Upcoming events

Muscatatuck Urban Training Center open house

On Oct. 10, MUTC will hold an open house for everybody to come out and see what is happening at the facility near Butlerville.

The public is invited to the event, which will run from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. MUTC staff will be on hand to answer questions and displays will explain the various vehicles, weapons systems and training techniques used at the site.

Muscatatuck is on U.S. Highway 50, two miles east of North Vernon.

Camp Atterbury food drive

Camp Atterbury will be collecting food until Nov. 15 as a community outreach project.

Anyone wishing to donate non-perishable food items may drop off the donations to Command Sgt. Maj. Spade or a directorate senior NCO.

Camp Atterbury toy drive

Camp Atterbury will be collecting toys until Dec. 15 as a community outreach project.

Anyone wishing to donate toys in the range of $5 to $15 for newborns through age 15 may drop off the donations to Command Sgt. Maj. Spade or a directorate senior NCO.

Reaper Ruck March

Please join the 138th RTI OCS Class 56-10 on its Annual 10-Mile Reaper Ruck March.

The date is Oct. 3 and the march begins at 3 p.m. in front of Bldg. 5. Uniform is ACU with patrol cap and rucksack.

RSVP to Staff Sgt. Tamara Truman (tamara.truman@ng.army.mil) if you would like to attend.

Camp Atterbury softball league

Team and player registration for the softball league is in the Fitness Center, Bldg. 329.

The league is open to all Camp Atterbury personnel. Practices are every Tuesday and Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

Fun Run

The 219th BfSB is hosting its second annual fun run at 10 a.m. on Oct. 9.

Entry fee is $20. A T-shirt is given to all paid entries but not guaranteed for late entries.

The start point is the 219th BfSB Armory and there will be a 219th BfSB FRG-sponsored cookout immediately following the race.

The proceeds of the race will be going to the 219th BFSB FRG.

For more information, contact Staff Sgt. Francis Vergara at ext. 2411 or at francis.Vergara@ng.army.mil.

Around Camp Atterbury

Above: Veterans with the 106th Infantry Division met at Camp Atterbury in September for a reunion of those who trained or were stationed at Camp Atterbury from 1942 to 1943. The 106th Infantry Division is known to be the hardest hit American unit in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II. The veterans presented Col. Todd Townsend, Camp Atterbury commander, with a U.S. flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol. The veterans asked that the flag fly at the camp in honor of the 106th training at Camp Atterbury.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LARRY HEIDER

Left: Camp atterbury's post chaplain, Lt. Col. Eric Ebb, escorts Bernice Ross, a member of Columbus First Church of Nazarene, to the chapel. Ross is holding cookies she and members of her church made to give to mobilized Soldiers during her tour of Camp Atterbury. Ross will be 99 in October.

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. WILL HILL

Pilot program offers second chance at high school diploma

By Sgt. Robert G. Cooper III
CRIER STAFF WRITER

Army National Guard leaders from around the country converged onto the remote Muscatatuck Urban Training Center for the dedication of the National Guard's only academy designed to help Soldiers receive their high school diplomas.

The Patriot Academy is a National Guard Bureau initiative allowing high school dropouts ages 17 through 20 a second opportunity to earn their diplomas. Currently, 47 students from 16 states are attending the academy, which is staffed by a full-time cadre of active duty National Guardsmen.

"The Patriot Academy can be described in two words: second chance," said Col. Perry Sarver Jr., the academy's commandant. "These Soldiers are here because they have unfinished business, and they are getting a second chance to right a wrong. These young men have started down a path that will change their lives forever."

The academy, which is a nine-month program, was launched last June under the guidance of former Army National Guard Director retired Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn, for high school dropouts who weren't able to finish high school for reasons other than disciplinary or legal. Students attending the academy attend basic training prior to arriving here, and then move on to their Advanced Individual Training after receiving their diploma. Although the first class consists of all males, the academy will be tailored to accommodate co-ed students in the future.

Pvt. Ismael Ramirez stands outside the National Guard Patriot Academy at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center. A native of Texas, Ramirez is scheduled to graduate from the nine-month program at the Academy with a high school diploma later this month.

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. ROBERT G. COOPER III

"Our mission is, very simply, to educate and train these young men to become the best citizen-Soldiers in the Army National Guard," Sarver said.

While at the academy, the student-Soldiers receive a nationally accredited diploma through online courses offered through Liberty University. While there are current Army initiatives out there designed to award GED certificates to its students, the Patriot Academy is the only program that offers a diploma.

Vaughn, the former Army National Guard Director, said the Patriot Academy is an investment in the Army's most precious asset.

"It's a workforce that's not going to be available if we don't get it right. It's someone that's not going to reach their full potential if we don't get that diploma early enough. We depend on this organization right here in this state to get it right."

In addition to academics, the students are required to attend Army training and accomplish community service projects around Jennings County in Indiana.

"The Academy will be strengthening the connection of each student-Soldier with that community service they provide," said Indiana Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman. "The

(SEE **ACADEMY**, PAGE 5)

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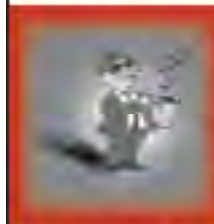

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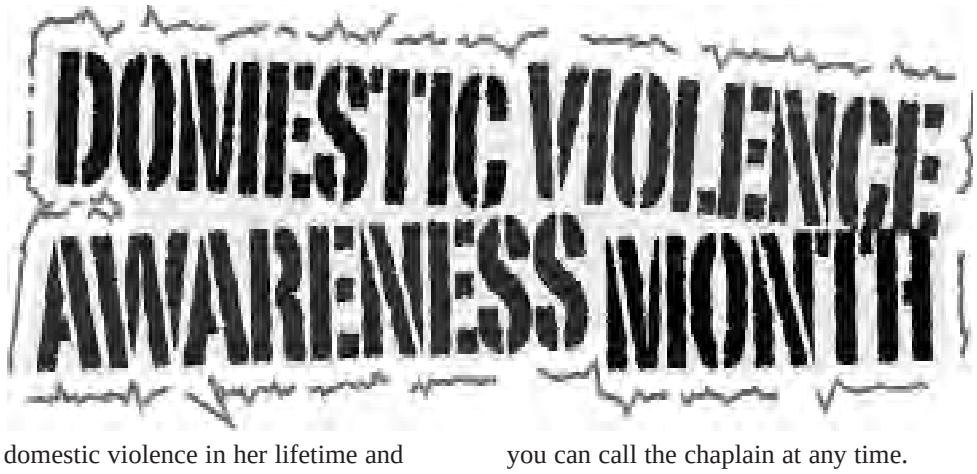
Commentary

No one deserves abuse; speak up as a friend and leader

By T.D. Jackson
CRIER STAFF WRITER



Some time ago, a co-worker of mine came to work with what I thought was a black eye. I noticed it as I was talking to her, and when it registered, my eyes sort of slid away from her face and began looking everywhere but at her. I thought to myself, "I am not going there," and I went on with my day without giving it too much thought.

Because I wasn't sure, I didn't feel the need to say something. But the sad part is, if it had been a more obvious black eye, I know I wouldn't have said a thing. I would have been too scared. Just like in the suicide training that we've had at Camp Atterbury over the past few months, I should have asked those painful but caring questions: Are you OK? And in this case, did somebody hit you?

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and in light of that, I thought I'd share some sobering statistics: one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime and females who are 20-24 years of age are at the greatest risk. Here's one you probably knew: Most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police. And one to blow your mind: Men are victims, too. More than 834,000 men annually report being domestically assaulted.

People who are abused often feel as though no one will believe them or they think they have nowhere to go for help. At Camp Atterbury, God knows (pun intended) you can call the chaplain at any time. Behavioral Health, too.

Even though this was some time ago, every now and then I still wonder, what if somebody did hit her? What if she needed to talk, but everyone – for different reasons – was afraid to talk about it? As a leader, I failed her. But this story, this anecdote, is my grasp at redemption. She will probably never set her sights on this article, but if in fact someone did put their hands on her, I would tell her I'm sorry. I'm sorry that happened to you and I'm sorry I was a chicken. If I had weighed the cost of embarrassment against the cost of caring, I wouldn't be writing this now.

I'm hoping maybe she didn't have a black eye. She may have – as I have on many occasions – caught a pitch with her face during softball practice. She may have – as I have on many occasions – stood a little too close to the top cabinet door as it swung open. For all I know, she could have gotten popped by a feisty rugrat. I don't know and I never will.

What I do know is although I cannot concern myself with every detail of a person's life, I can be aware of changes in their behavior, their moods and certainly their appearance. I was in a leadership position, and along with that title comes responsibility. It is my responsibility to make sure my people are OK at work and at home.

The mark of a good leader is the ability to listen and my friend, although I am late, I am all ears.

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Jennifer Wynn of Eli Lilly and Company adjusts the butt of her rifle before firing at stationary targets from a standing position during Camp Atterbury's annual Boss Lift.

CRIER PHOTO BY T.D. JACKSON

✦Boss Lift

(FROM PAGE 1)

to my employee to give it a good shot and to really feel the experience," Wynn said. "It was an adrenaline rush. I don't think it's something that I could ever get used to."

Wynn said she came at the request of her Soldier-employee, who figured Wynn would get a better understanding of what he does when he leaves for a week or a month at a time.

"I feel like I've gotten a very small glimpse into what it is he goes through," Wynn said. "It was completely different than anything I've ever experienced before and I guess to know that it's something that he does quite often is interesting."

James Kedra, assistant principal at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, was at ease on the rappel tower but far from relaxed on the rifle range.

"I rock climbed and rappelled before, so I was looking forward to that. That part never bothered me one bit," Kedra said. "The rifle range was a whole different story."

He said holding the rifle and shooting at the targets was unnerving.

"It was just that idea of being in the position of a (Soldier) and having to potentially take the life of somebody else. It just made me feel uncomfortable."

Kedra said he had never owned a firearm, let alone fired one, before the event. Never before, he said, had he thought about what it takes – psychologically – to pull the trigger.

"I've never held a gun before, so to even shoot at a target — a silhouette of a person — was very troubling," he said.

It was almost as though he'd been to war and back, just like one of his teachers. After participating in the Boss Lift, Kedra said he knows he could be even more supportive of the military in general and Veteran Affairs specifically.

"I think I'm more supportive now in thinking about how we deal with them when they return from combat," Kedra said.

"I've heard about post traumatic stress disorder. I've never experienced it," he said. "I got a taste holding that gun though. For me that was a whole different thing and that was just a small bit."

Reese said this was definitely what the ESGR would call a success: the employers enjoyed themselves and most gained a newfound respect for their military employees.

"I really think the employers had a much clearer picture of what their military employees have to endure when they come for their weekend training or who are getting ready to deploy," Reese said.

Reese said an added bonus was that all of the employers who participated in the Boss Lift signed Statements of Support, which basically stated they would honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act and would continually recognize and support servicemembers and their families in peace, in crises and in war.

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. ROBERT G. COOPER III

Students from the National Guard Patriot Academy sound off with the name of their platoon during the academy's dedication at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center. The Academy, which is the first of its kind, allows certain high school dropouts to earn their high school diplomas through online courses while serving in the Army National Guard.

✦Academy

(FROM PAGE 3)

culture of service has never been more important to our state and our nation. It's my hope that the graduates of this program return home with a real understanding of what it means to be a good neighbor as well as what it means to be a good Soldier."

One student-Soldier attending the academy, Pvt. Ismael Ramirez Jr., said that the academy has given him a chance at both serving and accomplishing something he never thought he could. A native of Roanoke, Texas, Ramirez was unable to receive his diploma because Texas law requires high school students to pass a qualifications exam.

"I had the credits I needed, but I didn't pass the final exam, so I wasn't issued a diploma," he said.

After speaking with a recruiter and learning about the Academy, Ramirez said that he wanted to enroll just because of the diploma program.

"Just the fact that I could get a high school diploma rather than a GED sounded better to me," Ramirez said. "It just makes me feel and sound like I've completed my school. Like our sergeant major once told us, we're not going to get this chance again. If you get the opportunity to come to the Patriot Academy to have your second chance, you actually get paid to go to school and learn new things.

"When it's all said and done, you walk out of here with extra knowledge; you walk out of here stronger."

KFOR 12: TRAINED U

Kosovo Forces 12 ramps up training for peace support mission

By Spc. Chris Erickson
KFOR 12 MNTF-E Public Affairs

Units involved in the upcoming Kosovo Forces 12 deployment are on their way to the final segment of mobilization training after finishing their exercises at Camp Atterbury.

KFOR 12 Multi-National Task Force-East – also known as Task Force Falcon – will go through its final Mission Rehearsal Exercise in Hohenfels, Germany.

The contingent is comprised of approximately 1,400 Soldiers. Thirteen states and the U.S. Virgin Islands all contributed units for the mission, augmented by individual Soldiers from nearly every other state. The force is split up into multiple task forces, each with their own specific mission.

Brig. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, commanding general of Multi-National Task Force-East, said the task force drew an advantage from having so many different backgrounds.

"They always say that diversity gives you strength, and I think in the case of KFOR 12, we've gained a lot of strength from all the diversity we have," Dohrmann said.

He said when the mobilization process began 18 months earlier, whenever a state was identified as being part of KFOR 12, North Dakota sent representatives out to "meet them, greet them and let them know what we were doing in North Dakota to get ready for the mission."

North Dakota is the lead state in the force, contributing about 700 Soldiers to the mission.

Lt. Col Lee Nordin, commander of Task Force Maneuver Task Force Two, said because the task force members had trained together for so long, they had consistently been ahead in the mobilization training process.

"We've had time to plan and execute our own training while we've been here," he said. "That's been a real advantage because it gives us prep and rehearsal time, which some units may not have.

Although each unit took care of some training at its home station, some things had to be done at Camp Atterbury. Units started by refining individual Soldier skills and then Command Post Exercises. The first Mission Rehearsal Exercise had to be carried out in order to see how the entire task force could work together under simulated real-world conditions.

"Because of that work we did before we got to (Camp Atterbury), this team came together very quickly and it shows in the training we have executed to this point," Dohrmann said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Cripe agreed.

"To fill the diversity of the force structure, we had no choice but to go deep (within individual units), and we're finding out that decision is paying huge dividends," Cripe said. "We are well ahead of where they expected us to be, which makes it easier on the Soldiers. Morale and discipline remain high."

Other leaders within KFOR 12 expressed the same sentiments.

"When you're good at what you do, it makes you feel better about what you're doing," Nordin said. "I see that when I speak to them and when they interact with each other."

The commanding general said throughout mobilization training, he was impressed by how dedicated Soldiers were to the mission.

"I have seen incredible initiative, attitudes are great and it's been a pleasure for me to be a part of this mission," Dohrmann said.

That morale and discipline has taken the large contingent through training such as land navigation, detainee operations, rappelling and riot control, to name a few.

Lt. Col. Wallace Bonds, commander of Task Force Aviation, said although his task force was comprised of Soldiers from three states, people got along and started working together quickly.

"The platoon who refills the helicopters with gas has seven Soldiers from South Carolina and six from Kentucky," Bonds said. "They fell in right together in the barracks and have had very good teamwork thus far. They set up a hot gas refuel point almost

(SEE **KFOR**, PAGE 8)

PHOTO BY SGT. JILL FISCHER

Soldiers from Kosovo Forces 12's Task Force Liaison and Monitoring Team, Team 1, practice entering and clearing a "house" during Military Operations on Urban Terrain at Camp Atterbury in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Kosovo. Task Force LMT is comprised of 957th Multi-Role Bridge Company from Bismarck, N.D. From left: Staff Sgt. John W. Dietrich, Pvt. 1st Class Josh E. Becker and Spc. Andy C. Huisman.

UP AND READY TO GO

Newly formed aviation maintenance unit takes on new mission

By Sgt. 1st. Class Mike Hagburg
116th PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

The aviation maintenance Soldiers of Kosovo Forces 12 are members of a new unit and will be performing a new mission during their deployment.

"We were notified to deploy in November 2008 but we just got federal recognition this past spring," Capt. Michael H. Gregory said. Gregory, of Appomattox, Va., commands Detachment 2 of Company B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion.

"We had to get guys trained up to deploy at the same time we were going through the intensive federal recognition process," he said.

During the deployment, Det. 2's Soldiers will help keep KFOR 12's UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters flying while carrying out a maintenance mission that is new to them. The 777th is an aviation intermediate maintenance, or AVIM unit, while Det. 2's mission on the Kosovo deployment will be to perform aviation unit maintenance, or AVUM.

Gregory said as aviation unit maintenance Soldiers, Det. 2's mechanics will do "all the goodwrench type stuff" for KFOR 12's Black Hawk helicopters.

"The unit aviation mechanic is probably the primary person responsible for keeping the aircraft in the air," said Spc. William E. Vickery of Hopewell, Va., one of Det. 2's aviation mechanics. "The guys are working real hard to do the best job they can."

Spc. William C. Ralston, of Centreville, Va., makes final adjustments on a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter repair job. Ralston is part of the new aviation unit of Kosovo Forces 12.

PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS MIKE HAGBURG

Gregory said it's a matter of shifting gears. "Most of the guys can do the work, but it's not what they have done on a day-to-day basis," he said.

Vickery said Det. 2's mechanics have been getting a good chance to practice unit level maintenance on the aircraft that KFOR 12 has been using at Camp Atterbury, where the unit has been training since Aug. 10. The Black Hawks KFOR 12 will be flying in Kosovo have already been shipped to Germany, so the aviators are using training aircraft on loan from other states.

"The training aircraft they send us typically aren't the best," said Sgt. 1st Class Jorge L. Rivera Diaz of Williamsburg, Va., who is in charge of maintenance control for Det. 2. "Two of our aircraft had been in cold storage and not flying."

Diaz said that while pilots were flying one of the "cold storage" Black Hawks, the helicopter's instruments detected metal in the oil. After the aircraft landed, Det. 2's mechanics drained out all the oil and strained it to find the metal fragments. The metal now must be analyzed.

"It may need a new transmission, it may just need a new filter and a flush," Diaz said. "We've had so many problems, but we've been able to deal with them."

KFOR 12's aviation commander, Lt. Col. Wallace S. Bonds of Isle Palms, S.C., said that Det. 2 had dealt well with the challenges of fixing the training aircraft.

"These maintenance guys have just been working their butts off night and day and have really done a great job to keep some in the air for us," Bonds said.

The aviation units of KFOR 12 come from South Carolina, Kentucky and Virginia, where Det. 2 is based. Working with Soldiers from faraway locations is nothing new for Det. 2: The 777th is headquartered in Arkansas and Company B, which Det. 2 is part of, is based in Hawaii.

"We're coming together, meshing together, working together," Gregory said. "Because of the training we've been through here, it didn't take long to form a cohesive unit."

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(FROM PAGE 6)

immediately, which has run smoothly from the get-go."

The maintenance crews, Bonds said, have been working diligently.

"They've been working their butts off night and day and have really done a great job to keep the helicopters in the air for us," he said.

The level of teamwork shown by the Soldiers will come in handy when Task Force Falcon places boots on the ground in Kosovo. Dohrmann said the mission – mandated by the United Nations through NATO – will be to maintain a safe and secure environment and ensure freedom of movement.

"In regular terms, that means an environment where kids feel safe playing or going to school and parents feel safe going to the market," Dohrmann said.

Dohrmann said by the time KFOR 12 ends, he wants the task force to have made a difference.

"It is important that we take what our predecessors have done and improve upon that," he said. "We want to make a difference in the lives of the people in Kosovo during the time we are there. We have talented people looking at how it is we can make a difference."

The Task Force Aviation commander agreed.

"Soldiers have been working extremely hard continuing to build the team," Bonds said.

"They understand what an important mission this is and they're doing great and are very excited."

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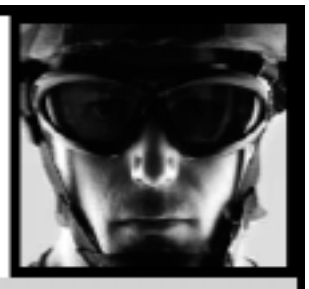
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Advocates hope walk brings others ‘out of the darkness’

By Sgt. Will Hill
CRIER STAFF WRITER

During a weekend filled with remembrance ceremonies for 9/11, almost 1,000 people participated in the Out of the Darkness Community Walk, a three-mile walk around White River State Park Canal for suicide prevention and awareness.

The 900-plus walkers, some individuals and some in teams, walked to help boost suicide prevention and awareness for the American Foundation for Suicide. Among the teams was Soldiers and Civilians for Suicide Prevention representing Camp Atterbury-Muscatatuck Center for Complex Operations.

The 19-member team raised approximately $3,500 and won second place for funds raised in support of American Foundation for Suicide.

Shannon Kummer of the CA-MCCO team and chief lead for Strategic Resources Inc. at Camp Atterbury raised $1,350.

“We are here to support all Soldiers and (also) in remembrance of my father, John Justice, a Special Forces Vietnam veteran who committed suicide,” Kummer said.

Since Jan. 1, the Army has reported 155 suicides.

Lt. Col Anita Thurston, team captain and plans, analysis and integration officer at CA-MCCO, said Kummer was an inspiration to all.

“I, like Shannon, am a survivor of suicide. A good friend of mine committed suicide and (American Foundation for Suicide) was a good resource I could turn to.”

The AFSP Web site has many educational tips on the early signs of suicide and how to talk to someone about suicide.

Thurston said asking someone how they are doing and making sure everything is OK with them could mean the difference between life and death for someone who is contemplating suicide.

“People contemplating suicide are feeling incredibly isolated and withdrawn and can’t find a way out and those questions give them a connection to somebody opening up another door,” Thurston said.

Shannon Kummer, a chief lead for Strategic Resources Incorporated at Camp Atterbury, writes her father’s name in chalk at the White River State Park Canal in Indianapolis Sept. 12 during the Out of the Darkness Community Walk for suicide awareness. Kummer raised $1,350, the second highest amount out of the 900-plus participants.

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. WILL HILL

Thurston said suicide is a national health problem and each year more people are addressing the issue that suicide is an illness and education is the cure.

At Camp Atterbury, the leadership made it mandatory that all Camp Atterbury workers participate in suicide awareness training.

Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Spade, Camp Atterbury command sergeant major, said the leadership worked a two-phased, practical training program to emphasize suicide awareness and prevention methods.

“This program is a true, matter-of-fact, no-nonsense training session that really makes you take a sharp look at yourself and your Soldiers,” he said.

“Like our counterparts throughout the military, this is an important issue to which leaders at all levels must be tuned into; moreover, we must be fully aware of our Soldiers’ well-being at all times,” he said.

One of directors of Out of the Darkness Community Walk, Kimble Richardson, said she looks forward to more military participation in the future.

“If the military was more involved, it would have a bigger reach and it would give Out of the Darkness a voice that says it’s OK to talk about suicide. Thoughts of suicide are not a weakness but an illness that can be addressed through education,” Richardson said.

For Richardson, the turnout for the walk event was better than he expected.

“To see people from all over the nation join together for such an important cause is a great thing.”

Donations for Out of the Darkness are still being collected until Dec. 31.

Visit http://afsp.donordrive.com to make a donation.

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

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New NCOs join ranks in historical outdoor ceremony

By Sgt. Brad Staggs
CRIER STAFF WRITER

In the career of any enlisted Soldier in the Army, there are benchmarks that allow an individual to say "I was proud."

The promotion from the specialist rank to the non-commissioned officer rank of sergeant is one of those times.

On Aug. 29, a ceremony was held at Camp Atterbury to induct 41 of the National Guard's newest sergeants into the NCO Corps. Family, friends and co-workers watched presentations explaining the history of the ceremony.

"The tradition of commemorating the passing of a Soldier to a non-commissioned officer can be traced to the Army of Frederick the Great," explained Sgt. 1st Class Trent Henry, one of the masters of ceremonies.

"We commemorate this right of passage to emphasize and build on the pride we all share as members of an elite corps."

Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe, formerly the command sergeant major of the National Guard and currently Special Assistant to the Adjutant General of Kentucky, was the guest speaker for the ceremony. Gipe charged the new NCOs with not only watching out for the Soldiers in their care, but the officers, as well.

"We are called the backbone of the Army because everybody looks to us to get the job done," Gipe told the assembled crowd. "And that is exactly what we need to do, no matter what the job is and no matter where the job takes us."

The new NCOs stood together and raised their right hands to take the Charge of the NCO, an oath all new sergeants take in which they promise to uphold the traditions and standards of being a non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army.

Each new NCO signed his name into the roll of the NCO Corps before passing under an arch that was placed on the stage. The passing under the arch symbolized the lower-enlisted Soldier passing into the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps. On the other side, each Soldier was presented a framed copy of the NCO Creed by Gipe and Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Spade, Camp Atterbury command sergeant major.

Coordinators of the ceremony hope that it will not be the last time such an event takes place.

The Soldiers being inducted into the NCO Corps came away with a sense of honor and achievement, knowing that the rest of their time in the military would be spent being a professional in their fields.

"This is the best ceremony of its kind I've been involved in," said Gipe.

"Indiana is really taking care of their people and I would like to see this happen all over the National Guard. Hooah to the leadership here."

Sgt. James F. Wood, the fitness center NCO at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center said he too appreciated the efforts of Camp Atterbury leaders.

"I think what they're doing here for us is a wonderful thing," Wood said.

"It really makes me feel like I've gone to another level in my career. I'm standing a little taller today."

Top: Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe, former command sergeant major of the National Guard, gives Sgt. Jorge Santiago a copy of the NCO Creed as Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Spade looks on. **Above:** Sgt. Maj. Roy Hamilton administers the Charge of the NCO to the Indiana National Guard's newest sergeants during the ceremony at Camp Atterbury.

CRIER PHOTOS BY SGT. BRAD STAGGS

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MUTC to host open house for public

By Sgt. Brad Staggs
CRIER STAFF WRITER

Muscatatuck Urban Training Center is throwing a party and everybody is invited! On Oct. 10, MUTC is hosting an open house for everybody to come out and see what is happening at the facility near Butlerville. The public is invited to the event which will run from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.

"We want to bring the public in and show them what it is we do on a day-to-day basis," said Lt. Col. Chris Kelsey, MUTC commander. "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."

The Indiana National Guard took over the former Muscatatuck State Developmental Center in July 2005 in order to turn the site into the Army's premiere urban training facility.

The facility itself has been around since 1920, when the Indiana Farm Colony for Feeble Minded Boys was opened on the site. From 1935 to 1950, several art deco and art modern buildings were constructed on the site. These one-of-a-kind buildings have been painstakingly cared for and continue to be kept up by the military.

Through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, several steps have been taken to document the history of Muscatatuck through the years. Nothing will be done to change the outward look of the historic buildings due to an agreement between the state and the military, according to Karstin Carmany, the Cultural Resource Manager for MUTC.

"The Indiana National Guard is being very careful to keep the buildings intact, and they are mindful of the historic significance of the site," she said.

The public will be able to see for themselves exactly how the buildings are maintained and utilized as a military training site. Driving tours will leave from the chapel at the top of each hour and walking tours will depart at the bottom of each hour during the day.

MUTC staff will be on hand to answer questions and show displays that explain the various vehicles, weapons systems and training techniques used at the site.

Kelsey said he has been planning the event for most of the past year.

"I've been wanting to have an event where we just open the facility up for all of our neighbors to see, and now we get to have it. I hope everybody comes out to Muscatatuck and finds out what we're all about."

Muscatatuck Urban Training Center is on Highway 50, two miles east of North Vernon.

Indiana National Guard Staff Sgt. Michael Fischer, right, Franklin, a Task Force 38 information technology administrator, smiles at his son, Spc. Jacob Fischer, a fueler with the 233rd Transportation Company.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JEFF LOWRY/ TASK FORCE 38 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Father, son meet in Kuwait

By Sgt. Jeff Lowry
TASK FORCE 38 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Like two ships passing in the night, two Soldiers, a father and a son briefly reunited as they headed in opposite directions.

Indiana National Guard Staff Sgt. Michael Fischer, an information technology administrator, was heading to Iraq with Task Force 38.

Army Spc. Jacob Fischer, a fueler with the 233rd Transportation Company, was heading back to the states after a year-long deployment to Iraq.

"It's fantastic," said Jacob about seeing his father again. The Fischers hadn't seen each other since January 2009, when Jacob was home on rest and relaxation leave from his deployment.

"We didn't think we'd see each other for another year," said Jacob, referring to either his father's R&R leave or final homecoming, "but this is really cool."

The two spent about an hour together, had lunch at a sandwich shop, and talked about Jacob's deployment experiences. Jacob also gave his father advice on "do's" and "don'ts" while in theater.

Yet, it was the father who initiated the meeting by contacting the Camp Virginia chaplain, who tracked down his son. Jacob caught a convoy to Camp Buehring and met his father at the chapel here.

The two hugged upon seeing each other, and Michael agreed with his son about the happy meeting. "It was a joy to see him; we enjoyed each other's company," said Michael. "It's good to see him go home and see family."

Two ships: one, Jacob, should reach home port soon; Michael is soon to arrive at a foreign port.

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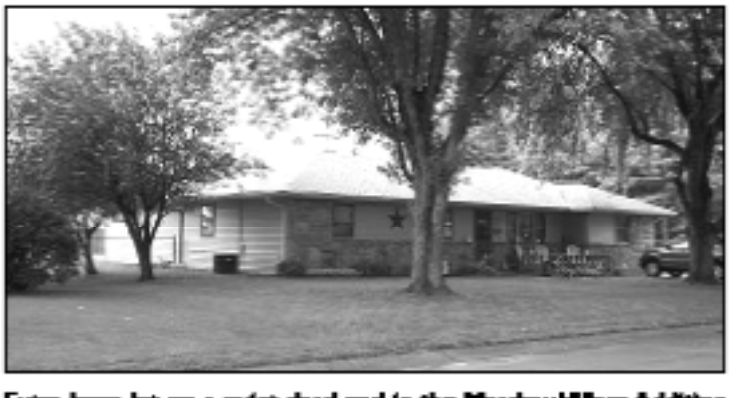
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Franklin College freshmen 'focus' on cleaning up community

By Sgt. Will Hill
CRIER STAFF WRITER

The freshmen at Franklin College dedicated their first day of orientation to making the local community more beautiful.

About 100 students got their hands dirty at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center and 300 other students went to various locations throughout Johnson County as part of the school's community service program. The program FOCUS Day — Franklin Offering the Community Unselfish Service — was started in 1999 by Franklin College students.

The freshmen who came to Camp Atterbury pulled weeds, cleared trails, painted office buildings and landscaped around the installation with the help of student leaders and staff members.

Although the students were sweating as they dug up the old mulch in front of the Fitness Center, they wore smiles on their faces.

"This is tough work, but it feels good to help out and make a difference," said student Brittany Covert.

The program gave the students a chance to meet new people and staff members before they started classes.

CRIER PHOTO BY SGT. WILL HILL

Sgt. Joseph Phelps of Morale, Welfare and Recreation, helped students from Franklin College clear weeds in front of the Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center Fitness Center for the college program FOCUS Day, a community service program designed to integrate freshmen with the community.

"The best part about all this, besides helping Soldiers, is making new friends," Covert said.

Bonnie Pribush, the leadership program director at Franklin College, said the program is designed to do three things: help students meet new people, develop leadership and connect them with the community.

Samuel West, a sophomore and team leader, said his task was to make sure everyone was having a good time and behaving according to their school's core values, two of which are respect and responsibility.

"I am just glad to be here helping out Camp Atterbury. Few students get a chance to visit the base, but it gives me a sense of pride knowing the Army is so close to us," West said.

Capt. Mathew McGowen, officer-in-charge of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Camp Atterbury, said the students were a great help in completing the projects.

"These students did not just help build a nicer Camp Atterbury but they helped build a better community relationship," McGowen said.