



Florida Air National Guard
Families + Readiness = Mission Success

June 2007 Newsletter

Please forward this home to your family members!

News from your Wing Family Program Coordinator

I hear a lot "you are never in the office" and indeed that seems to be true! Between visiting our GSU's, receiving training or attending conferences and meetings it does take me away from the office quite a bit. In May I had the opportunity to attend the Florida Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee (FISFAC) meeting at MacDill AFB in Tampa. The objective of this group is for military units and emergency organizations to coordinate our efforts in the case of a natural disaster or other emergency. Active Duty, Reserve and Guard components were represented as well as police, fire and environmental agencies on a County, State and National level. We discussed the hurricane season and I hope you had a chance to review my e-mail that was sent out about a week ago which gave some great info to help you prepare and be ready.

This week I attended the Florida Defense Alliance semi-annual meeting in Orlando, FL. This group acts as an advocate for the military and works with State and Federal legislature to ensure our needs are being met and our concerns heard. I also attend the Family Support Working Group chaired by COL Pat Flynn from HQ. This group acts to "ensure active and retired Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen including the Guard and Reserves and their dependents receive continual improvement to their quality of life."

I took away great information from both groups and established essential contacts which will help with outreach both for our units and our families.

Sincerely,

Laura Pageau

202nd Red Horse Squadron Returns!

As most of you are aware the 202nd is back from deployment. It was a very busy time and I enjoyed meeting the many spouses, parents, and friends of the Airmen in the unit. I wanted to make a special mention in thanking **Mrs. Lynn Brannon** and **Mrs. Brenda Carroll** for all of their help and support in getting me up to speed with the unit. It was difficult coming on new and already having a unit deployed and these two wonderful ladies helped me to get the word out and get in touch with the right people and our families. I would also like to thank Denny Mineweaser and TSgt Thomas Lindsay for all of their help and coordination out at Camp Blanding.

A BIG thanks goes out to everyone who supported the various reunion events including the USO, JIA, The Patriot Riders, Blue Star Moms, Jacksonville Police Athletic League, The Jaguars Cheerleaders, as well as Country Caterers and Firehouse Subs and many more. The amount of care and support that went into these events was phenomenal and we could not have done it without our community partners.

For the Airmen and families of the 202nd mark your calendar for Saturday, 14 July for a reunion picnic at Camp Blanding which will be sponsored by local VFW units. You will be receiving a formal invitation shortly.

Citizen Solder Program

There are many issues that I can assist with and a common concern for our traditional Guardsmen is the pay difference between their civilian job and when they go on active duty orders. In many cases people are taking significant pay cuts and that can cause a hardship. The Citizen Soldier Program was designed as a way to help alleviate this. The Citizen Soldier program provides matching grants to be awarded to Florida private sector employers who provide wages to their Florida resident employees serving in the United States Armed Forces Reserves or the Florida National Guard while those employees are on federal active duty. The law limits each grant to one-half of the difference between the amount of monthly wages paid by the employer to the employee at the level paid before the date the employee was called to federal active duty.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE? Florida private sector employers paying supplemental wages to an employee who is a Florida resident and is serving on active duty in the United States Armed Forces Reserves or the Florida National Guard.

WAGE SUPPLEMENT! Private sector employers may be reimbursed for up to fifty percent of supplemental wages paid to their employees. Employers will be reimbursed 50% of the difference between the employee's gross monthly private sector wage and the employee's gross monthly active duty base pay and applicable allowances.

As funding is limited, the program is available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more details, call the Agency for Workforce Innovation toll free at 1-800-342-3450 or visit the website at http://www.floridajobs.org/citizen_soldier/index.html.

Military Spouse & Family Employment Services

WorkSource is a not-for-profit agency that works with the State of Florida and many partnering agencies to provide employment related services. One great resource we have available are the services of a dedicated Military Spouse Employment Advocate. There are eight located throughout the state of Florida and they are dedicated to helping spouses finding meaningful employment while also acting as an advocate.

For more information please contact Patty Piazza on 904-997-3100 x2350 or via e-mail at ppiazza@worksourcefl.com. In addition I have her business cards and a flyer available in the Family Readiness office.

Voluntary Pre-K Registration Information

If you have a child that was born between September 2, 2002 and September 1, 2003 you are eligible to enroll your child in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program for the 2007-2008 school year. Visit <http://www.floridajobs.org/VPK/CoalitionInfo.aspx> for more information about VPK programs in your area! There are both summer and school-year options available to you.

Childcare Subsidies for Activated Airmen Available

The Defense Department has joined forces with national agencies to help Guard and Reserve families in finding and affording child care while Mom or Dad is deployed in support of the global war on terrorism. DoD, in partnership with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), which administers the program, designed this initiative to benefit those who do not live near military installations. The goal is to help reduce the out-of-pocket expense to the service member.

When a parent is deployed, the remaining parent or caregiver may discover that child care is something the couple hadn't had to think of before. And need is not the only consideration. The extra expense can be shocking. While Operation Military Child Care (OMCC) doesn't fully subsidize child care, it does work to reduce the financial burden. The fees are based on a sliding scale that takes into consideration total family income and the care provider's actual cost, among other things.

To take part in the program you apply through NACCRRA via a special Web site (see below) or by a toll-free call to (800) 424-2246. The subsidy goes to the program, not to the individual so if your provider is not in the system they would need to apply as well.

For more information please visit: <http://www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms/assistance.php>

Possible Telephone Scam Targets Military Families

The American Red Cross is warning military families to be alert to a possible telephone scam targeting military families. The warning comes after a military spouse received a telephone call from an individual claiming to be a Red Cross representative. The caller stated the spouse's husband had been injured in Iraq. The caller then stated medical treatment could not start until the paperwork was completed and that in order to start the paperwork they needed the spouse to verify her husband's social security number and date of birth. Fortunately, the spouse was on the alert and did not provide any information to the caller.

So far this is the only reported incident of this kind. However, military families should be aware that American Red Cross representatives typically do not contact military members or their family members directly and almost always go through the chain of command. If a Service member is injured, the Department of Defense will notify the family directly.

In general, Service members and their families should be careful not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unknown/unverified individuals. If an individual is unsure about the identity of a caller, he or she should take the caller's name, telephone number and organizational affiliation and then verify the caller's identity independently. The American Red Cross has issued a press release about this matter: http://www.redcross.org/pressrelease/0,1077,0_314_6732,00.html.

Here's to the Heroes from Anheuser-Busch

Anheuser-Busch is offering complimentary admission for active duty military representing all five service branches, active members of a reserve or National Guard unit, and/or up to three direct dependents. The offer is valid for one complimentary single-day admission per person, per year, to one Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks including SeaWorld Orlando, San Diego, or San Antonio, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay or Williamsburg, Sesame Place, Water Country USA and Adventure Island. The offer is valid between 1/1/2007 and

12/31/2007. Operating days and hours vary by park, please check with the specific park for current operating schedule. For more information visit: http://commerce.4adventure.com/store/os_application.asp .

USAA Deployment Kit

Many of our units who recently deployed were given USAA deployment kits which are a GREAT tool to organize your files and important papers. With hurricane season here I encourage you to take the time or really organize your vital information so that it is ready if needed or can be taken with you in a hurry.

If you would like to have a USAA deployment kit which will help you in this please stop by the FR office or if you are at one of the GSU's e-mail me and I can have one sent to you.

Helpful Resources!

Operation Family First <http://www.operationfamilyfirst.org> 1-877-FNG-4447

Military One Source <http://www.militaryonesource.com> 1-800-342-9647

Both are manned 24-7 and are FREE and CONFIDENTIAL!

Contact the Family Readiness Office or stop by for a visit!

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<http://www.fangfamilies.org>

I am located at the 125th Fighter Wing. My office is in the back of the HQ building facing the parking lot. If you know where the credit union office used to be you know where to find me! I'm sorry I don't have any cash to hand out but I always have a smile, a comfortable chair to relax in and a bowl full of candy!