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<b>Weather Forecast</b>	<b>Today</b> <b>High:65</b> <b>Low:47</b>
	<b>Saturday</b> <b>High:68</b> <b>Low:29</b>
	<b>Sunday</b> <b>High:33</b> <b>Low:16</b>

**FRIDAY**

# Fort Riley Post




**Operation underway**  
"Operation Santa Claus helps the kids who otherwise wouldn't have a Christmas," said Charlie Quick, NCOA member and co-organizer. "OSC is a wonderful holiday tradition for Fort Riley and the Flint Hills area."  
See Page 13

November 21, 2003

America's Warfighting Center

Vol. 46, No. 47

## Two more Soldiers killed in Iraq

Staff Reports

The Department of Defense announced that Spc. Irving Medina, 22, of Middleton, N.Y., was killed Nov. 14 and Capt. James A. Shull, 32, of California, was killed Nov. 17 in Baghdad, Iraq.

Medina was assigned to Service Battery, 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division. He joined the Army in September 2001 and has been stationed at Fort Riley since December 2001. He was assigned to the unit as a cannon crewmember and deployed to Iraq the end of April.

Medina was traveling in a wheeled vehicle convoy that was struck by an improvised explosive device. The incident is under investigation.

He is the 14th Fort Riley Soldier who has died while serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Shull was assigned to Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division. He joined the Army in August 1996 and has been stationed at Fort Riley since March 2003. He was assigned to the unit as a field artillery officer and deployed to Iraq the end of April.

See Soldiers Page 4



An M1A1 Abrams Tank from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor, fires at a target down range at the Multi-Purpose Range Complex during Table VIII qualification.

## Armor rocks range with Table VIII gunnery

By Kevin Doheny  
19th PAD

Imagine being the enemy and seeing a company of 69-ton M1A1 Abrams Tanks closing in on a position at over 40 miles per hour.

They make their move, sit in place and with exact precision, and fire on the target.

The 120mm smooth bore cannon blasts a high explosive anti-tank round, which penetrates the target and terminates it.

The tank crew acknowledges the quick victory, but notices another enemy target on the move. The quick silence turns to immediate action. The communication lines between the four Soldiers in the tank crew become heated.

"Moving tank!"  
"Gunner, battle sight, tank!"

"Up!"  
"Identified!"  
"Fire!"  
"On the way!"  
"Target!"

These commands are used when tank crews are in an engagement.

Those phrases were all over the radios as the Kansas plains were once again rocked with large and small explosions as one of Fort Riley's tank battalions hit the

Multi-Purpose Range Complex Nov. 14. The Dreadnaughts of 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor conducted a gunnery training exercise, more specifically, Tank Table VIII.

"Table XII is the big exercise for the platoons, but for most of these guys take more out of Table VIII because it is a qualification for the individual crews,"

See Gunnery Page 6

## Fort Riley Soldier speaks out: Know when to get help with stress

By Gary Skidmore  
Command Information Officer

Matthew smiled today. It wasn't a big toothy grin, but it was a smile, and for him, it was a milestone.

He's said he is no longer a happy, carefree kid from the Midwest. He's more introverted these days. He said he keeps things to himself. If he talks about his problems, he loses control, and he said he insists on being in control of his life and everything that effects it.

Matthew also said he's got a short fuse -- a quick temper. He explained that all the anger management in the world doesn't seem to help.

Matthew, 19, has seen death. He said he has seen more death than many his age, and it has changed him. So much so,

that he said he has considered suicide as a way to get past his inner demons.

"My company was responsible for killing a lot of Iraqis during the war," said Matthew. "My platoon was responsible for most of them. We were in constant contact with the enemy."

For 21 straight days," Matthew said, "we'd clear one town and move right into another, always being outside of Kabala. That day changed my life and the lives of the rest of the Soldiers in my platoon," said Matthew, who said he really wasn't scared during all of the combat he endured.

"You have to have faith in the guys around you. They know their jobs and they trust me to know mine."

But after he lost his roommate, he said the war got real for him. He said he thinks too much now and questions decisions and he wants more control over himself. When he got home, he said he didn't feel excited and he didn't care about much.

And when he got home he said his truck wasn't where it was promised to be. He said this was a major disappointment for him because he dreamed of the moment he'd get behind the wheel, take control and drive off the installation. He said he was anxious to be free to turn

down any city street without someone trying to kill him.

"The battery was dead and wasn't left in the commissary parking lot like I planned. I spent a lot of time thinking and planning what I was going to do when I got home and after all that planning, I had to wait."

Matthew, said the world was crashing down on him.

"When I got home, it was nice. My mom was happy I was home, but I knew I wasn't right," said Matthew.

Matthew said one day, while cleaning his shotgun, he slid a round into the chamber and wondered what it would be like to pull the trigger.

"It scared me," said Matthew. I'd

**"You have to have faith in the guys around you. They know their jobs, and they trust me to know mine."**

—Matthew Fort Riley Soldier

See Suicide Page 7

## Fallen Soldiers honored with memorial service

By Jamie Bender  
1BCT Staff Writer

FALLUJAH, Iraq—"It's not the medal that made the man, when you gave it all you can. You are at peace; you are settled. Tonight I realize, it's the man that made the medal," sang Sgt. Robert Miller in a song he wrote for his comrades who were killed in action Nov. 8.

A memorial service was held for Sgt. 1st Class Gary L. Collins and Staff Sgt. Mark D. Vasquez, both of Company A, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, Nov. 11 at Camp Mercury, near Fallujah, Iraq.

Collins and Vasquez were killed in an improvised explosive device attack while conducting route clearance north of Fallujah, Company A, 1st Bn., 16th Inf., is attached to 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, as part of a task force.

Capt. James Rogers, commander, Co. A, 1st Bn., 16th Inf., spoke of the Soldiers' performance as noncommissioned officers.

"Both of them were professional Soldiers who dedicated their lives to the defense of their country," he said. "Each of them was a

model leader who epitomized the Ranger and NCO creeds. They truly cared for their men and, in return, were respected and loved. For the Soldiers, they were not only their superiors but also their mentors. For their peers and leaders, they not only provided counsel, but also were friends. Their personalities were a major portion of the dynamics of Attack Company."

Rogers also spoke of the things Collins' will be remembered for in the company.

"Collins sense of humor will always be remembered. No matter how difficult or trying times became, he would always find some humor in just about any situation. He was always there for others to draw comfort from."

Rogers then talked about Vasquez's professionalism.

"When he spoke, people listened and learned from his wisdom and insight. He had the ability to cut to the core of any situation. He could always be counted on to tell it how it was. Personally, I will truly miss his presence and counsel."

In addressing the Soldiers of Company A, Rogers told them how they could honor the memo-



A photo of Staff Sgt. Mark D. Vasquez and Sgt. 1st Class Gary L. Collins, along with other members of their unit, stands at the fallen soldiers memorial at Morris Hill Chapel on Fort Riley.

See Memorial Page 6

## Medical Holdovers receiving prompt care

By Emilie L. Howe  
MEDDAC PAO

From the medical care standards of Irwin Army Community Hospital to the living accommodations of Fort Riley's 6025th Garrison Support Unit - Brig. Gen. C. William Fox, Jr., said a great job is being done for the Medical Holdover servicemembers. Fox is the commanding general of the Great Plains Regional Medical Command, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In addition to Fox, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Health Affairs, Edward P. Wyatt, Jr., Washington, D.C., said that he was going to take Fort Riley's process of caring and managing Medical Holdovers to other military installations as an example of good management practices. Fox and Wyatt visited IACH and Fort Riley, Nov. 3-5.

The term Medical Holdover refers to Soldiers who cannot perform their duties, even within temporary profile limits, or do not meet retention fitness standards, according to the "Medical Holdover: Processing and Status," presented by Col. Julie M. Martin, hospital commander, IACH.

The Fort Riley Garrison cuts the orders to assign Soldiers to the U.S. Army Garrison, Company A, 6025th GSU. Then Co. A takes care of the Soldiers' living accommodations, initial counseling about their responsibilities as Medical Holdover Soldiers, meeting their chain of command, scheduling appointments with their Case Managers at IACH, appropriate work assignments and transportation to and from their medical appointments.

"IACH and the 6025th GSU have a cooperative relationship," said Capt. Linda Manza, mobilization officer, IACH. An example is the continued weekly meetings between the IACH Case Man-

See Holdovers Page 5





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# Commentary

## Memorial service teaches intern about honor, Army family

By Adam Clayton  
K-State Intern

As a civilian, I have spent the 21 years of my life with absolutely no connection to the U. S. Army, much less Fort Riley. As the fall 2003 semester rolled around, kicking off my senior year at Kansas State, all of that changed.

I began interning at the Public Affairs Office and I fell, head first, into a sea of procedures and jargon I did not understand. As weeks went by, I slowly began to get a grasp on things. I started to understand some of the acronyms and came to truly appreciate the 59-minute rule (leaving work early).

The selling point of this internship is, I am exposed to a world much bigger than

the one I lived in. I have experienced some interesting things during my time here, including meeting the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter Schoomaker.

But nothing I have done here will touch me, shake me or stay with me the way Staff Sgt. Mark Vasquez and Sgt. 1st Class Gary Collins' memorial service will. These Fort Riley Soldiers were recently killed in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. I attended the service on Nov. 14 because my supervisor felt it would be a valuable experience for me. She had no idea how right she was.

I filed into Morris Hill Chapel, along with several other civilian and military personnel, and picked a seat near the back, not knowing what to expect. What first caught my eye was the display at the front of the church. Two kevlar were

resting on M-16s, and two sets of boots were placed in front of them. At the time, this was nothing more than a display to me.

What took place next was quite moving. Several touching e-mails from fellow Soldiers still overseas were read. Soldiers who knew these men stood up and told countless stories about the two, laughing and crying all the while. But these weren't just stories, they were tributes. Every other word uttered was mentor, leader or hero.

No medal or award could possibly be as fulfilling to those two men or their families as that memorial. For the children of those Soldiers who lost their fathers, nothing will bring them back. But there is solace in knowing that as they grow up, they will know their

fathers loved them, and they unselfishly gave everything they could to protect the life we as Americans all hold so dear. Because of that memorial, the children of the fallen Soldiers will know for a fact, their fathers are heroes.

I had never thought of the Army as a family. When I walked out of that ceremony, I realized the Army is a family and Fort Riley, an extension of that family. I saw a genuine love being shared in that church. Everyone who spoke referred to Vasquez and Collins as brothers, and the toughest men in the world. Army Soldiers wept for their fallen brothers.

That is what being a family is all about, being close through the good times and even closer through bad times. That memorial service was exactly that — a family taking care of its loved ones when

they needed it most.

By the end of the service, I understood something important. Those kevlar, boots and guns were not just a display. They symbolized something more.

I came to realize that equipment is not what makes a Soldier. What makes a Soldier is what fills the boots, holds the gun and wears the kevlar.

It is a person, a member of a family who protects the freedom of millions of Americans — many times without thank you. This is a family where everyone laughs, cries and even dies together.

I am humbled and honored to experience, in the short time I have been here, a small piece of the Army family here at Fort Riley. This life has definitely opened my eyes.

## Soccer balls more than just sporting goods

By Capt. Michael Coerper  
2nd Battalion, 70th Armor

BAGHDAD, Iraq — You can look into the future of Iraq through the eyes of its children. Driving in and out of the city each day, we see different attitudes toward American Soldiers.

Most children between the ages of five and eleven show a lot of enthusiasm by waving their hands, smiling and raising their thumbs. Some do show animosity toward the American Soldiers by throwing rocks or giving them the cold shoulder. This is what they learned from their parents, relatives and friends.

As the school year came to an end in July and August, the children had no idea what would come of their schools. Each school had many problems that had occurred during and after the ground war.

Due to excessive looting, the schools did not start classes until the first week of October. Many of the repairs did not get accom-

plished in time or did not even get started.

Our civil affairs team was tasked to pass out some soccer balls that had been donated to all the schools throughout Abu Ghraib.

While driving around the city, we noticed that a kindergarten school had been completely renovated.

As we entered the building, the children jumped out of their seats to say hello and wave their hands in appreciation for the rebuilding of their school.

The headmistress showed us what improvements had been accomplished. The entire school was painted inside and out, the floor was carpeted from wall to wall and the classrooms were furnished with new desks and chairs. One room was transformed into a recreation room, with swings, merry-go-rounds and slides.

The children gathered around the Soldiers to look at what they had brought. They were very enthusiastic to see the soccer balls, since soccer (football, in

Iraq) is their number one sport. I was pleased to see that the girls were just as excited as the boys to receive the soccer balls.

The joy of watching all the kids running around filled my heart with happiness.

We then drove to another school to pass out soccer balls; a school that has not yet been renovated.

We feared that the children and teachers would have negative thoughts toward us. Like most schools, they were told that their school would be renovated prior to the new school year, and they had seen little or no improvement.

As we entered into the headmaster's office, we were greeted with small waving hands and bright smiles peeking around corners.

The children were excited to see American Soldiers at their school. They, too, were running around in joy after receiving the soccer balls.

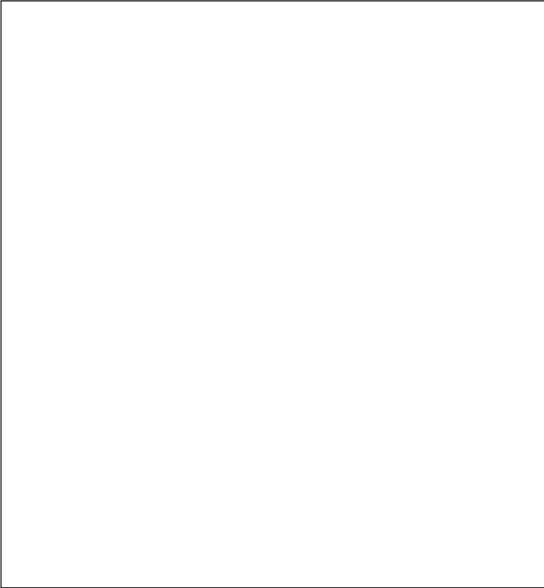
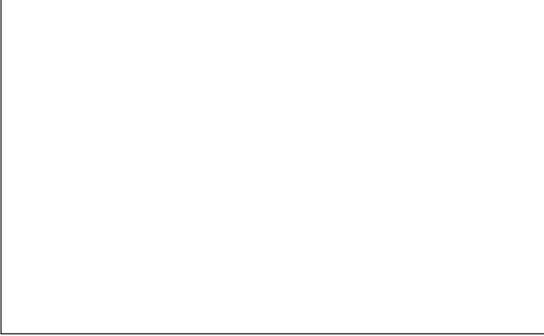
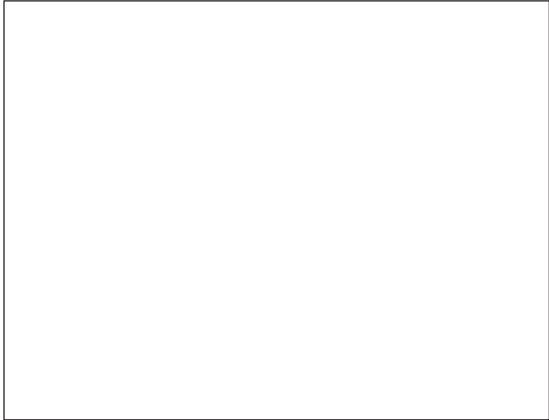
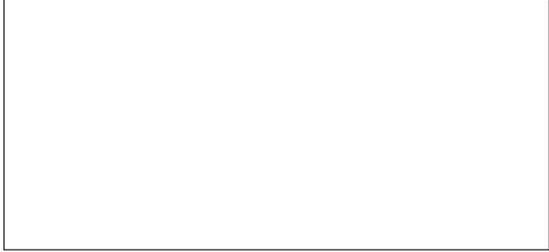
As we were leaving, the headmaster reached out to shake the hands of all of the civil affairs

team to show appreciation for the donation of balls.

We may not be able to fix everything in this country as quick as the Iraqi citizens want, but we can show the children that we will help them in any way we can.

Passing out soccer balls is a little thing for us to do, but, in the children's eyes, we are showing interest in them. These children are the next leaders of this country, and if we can help them realize that their best interests are what's most important to us, then the future is bright.

Grunt By Wayne Uden



# Fort Riley engineers help plan, build city for troops in 60 days

By J. H. French  
82nd Airborne Division

AR RAMADI, Iraq - The task was to build a city in 60 days, and that is exactly what engineers from the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division did. From a dining facility to offices, from living quarters to roads, from electricity to a post exchange, the engineers took an abandoned Iraqi military installation and turned it into home for more than two thousand Soldiers from 1st Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Riley, 1st Cavalry Regiment from Fort Hood, paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, and several National Guard and Reserve units, all serving as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The camp needed to be completed in 60 days because it is possible to live out of a rucksack for that long, said Maj. Steven D. Hart, operations officer, 1st Eng. Bn. "After 60 days, it becomes hard to continue to live in a tent and do personnel hygiene and laundry."

The first task was to get rid of all the trash left behind, continued Hart. "The place stank to high heaven."

"We moved 70 to 80 thousand cubic yards of trash and put it into the inner berm," said Staff Sgt. John C. Kelley, platoon sergeant, 568th Engineer Company.

"The berm is seven and a half kilometers long," Kelley said. The Soldiers worked on it for 25 days before it was complete.

According to Capt. Guy D. Joseph, commander, 248th Engineer Company, a National Guard unit out of Connecticut, his unit arrived in July and immediately started the rubble clean up and worked on that nearly non-stop for five weeks.

"The place was trashed when we got here," said Joseph. "The entire compound was infested with sand fleas."

In some places there were coils and knots of wire 40 feet tall, he continued. There were also more

than 30 small buildings that had to be torn down.

Another job was to consolidate the pits for burning the trash, Hart said. "When 1st BCT got here, there were 32 burn pits, and it caused a big stink," he said.

**"Even with all the difficulties, inside 60 days we will have a very livable camp."**

**—Maj. Steven D. Hart  
Operations Officer  
1st Engineer Battalion**

In addition to the burn pit, water evaporation pits had to be built as well. "We dug 50 by 50 meter drainage pits for the showers," said Pvt. 2 Ian L. Dixon, crane operator, 568th Eng. Co.

The second task was to organize a plan for the city. Where Soldiers are going to live, where will they work, where do they dispose of their trash and how can electricity be provided to all the buildings were all part of getting the city organized and up and running, said Hart. "Synchronizing the dozens of bits and pieces of a

plan we inherited was a big problem. We had 12 people doing 12 different things, so we had to get everyone moving in the same direction."

Roads and barricades for force protection were a big issue early on, said Dixon, who arrived in the middle of September.

The Soldiers brought in tons of gravel to lie on the roads, Kelley said.

One problem during the project was the work done by some of the local contractors said Joseph, whose company is in charge of quality control. "We are going to have to go back and redo a lot of the wiring the contractors did. It just isn't up to standards."

The biggest problem so far is the language barrier, he continued. "Getting to all the local contractors, meeting people and getting what we need is difficult."

"Even with all the difficulties, inside 60 days we will have a very livable camp," Hart said. Everyone will be inside, have water, power, sewage and a place to sleep.

"It is better than I expected," laughed Kelley. "We have air conditioning and heat. We could be living caveman style."

## Talk Around Town

### "What are your plans for Thanksgiving?"



**"I will be going home and spending Thanksgiving with my wife, son, daughter-in-law, and my brother and sister-in-law."**

*SFC Richard Sweet  
3/382 Logistics Support  
Battalion*



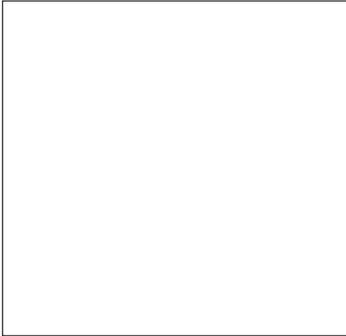
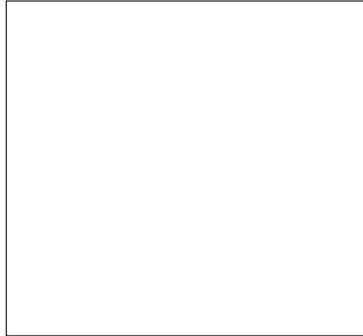
**"My family and I are going to my parents' home in Dallas."**

*Sgt. 1st Class Derrick  
Sheppard  
1G Office*



**"I am going to visit my son at the Air Force Academy and have dinner with him."**

*Maj. Jeffrey Coverdale  
Headquarters and Headquarters  
Company,  
35th Infantry Division*



# Fort Riley honors Collins, Vasquez with memorial service

By Ryan D. Wood  
19th PAD

The Fort Riley community came together on Nov. 14 to say farewell to two brothers in arms who died while serving freedom's cause in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sgt. 1st Class Gary L. Collins and Staff Sgt. Mark D. Vasquez were killed while on patrol in Iraq on Nov. 8 when their vehicle was hit with an improvised explosive device.

People who had known the men in war and peace took time to remember two heroes in a chapel filled to capacity with people there to support those who had lost too much.

Lt. Col. Oscar J. Hall, 1st Brigade provisional commander, praised the fallen soldiers and all that they had accomplished.

"We have come here today to pay tribute to these fine non-commissioned officers," he said, "leaders of men - who have made the ultimate sacrifice to a nation, who epitomized the 1st Infantry motto, 'No Mission too Difficult, No Sacrifice too Great.'"

"Sgt. 1st Class Collins and Staff Sgt. Vasquez's lives were lives of unselfishness, bravery and dedication — the true life of a non-commissioned officer," said Hall.

Hall praised not only what the men had given to the cause, but also what they represented to a nation torn by the threat of terrorism.

"The Army takes pride in being the best fighting force in the

world," said Hall. "Time after time, Soldiers have prevailed, even in the most trying of conflicts. It is because we pursue our goals with a tenacity and determination that has made us legendary. The men that we honor here today displayed that same tenacity and determination. They represent the best of the best."

Hall voiced his strongest praise with a simple remembrance of the two Soldiers.

"Sgt. 1st Class Collins and Staff Sgt. Vasquez," he said, "were true patriots who's professionalism was only surpassed by their unselfishness and their commitment to excellence."

Collins was born May 18, 1971, in Beaumont, Texas. Shortliffe graduation from Magnolia High School in 1990, he enlisted in the Army as an Infantryman.

After graduation from basic training and advanced individual training, Collins completed the Infantry Fighting Vehicle Course. Collins' first duty station was Baumholder, Germany, where he served until January 1994. Upon completion of his overseas tour, Collins was assigned to Company C, 2-5 Cavalry, Fort Hood, Texas, where he served as a squad leader.

In 1997, Collins served in the Army Reserve for one year. Upon reentering active service, Collins was assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, Fort Riley, where he served as both an infantry squad leader and a Bradley section leader.

In 1999, Collins was deployed to Bosnia for seven months. Upon returning, Collins successfully

completed both Ranger School and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga. In June 2001, Collins again served overseas in Korea.

Collins then returned to Company A at Fort Riley. Collins deployed to Iraq with 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in September 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Collins' awards include the Purple Heart (posthumously), Army Commendation Medal with six oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with six oak leaf clusters, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Parachutist Badge and the Expert Infantry Badge.

Collins is survived by his wife, Kasandra, two daughters, his father, Don Collins, his mother, Sandra Fontenot, and his three sisters.

Vasquez was born April 19, 1968, in Port Huron, Mich. On April 20, 1993, Vasquez enlisted in the Army as an infantryman.

After completing Infantry School at Fort Benning, he was assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, Schofield, Hawaii.

In 1996, he was reassigned to Fort Lewis, Wash., where he served in 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry. Vasquez then served in Korea. After his overseas tour, Vasquez returned to Fort Campbell.

Vasquez then served with Company A, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry as an infantry squad leader. While assigned to Fort Riley in 2003, Vasquez successfully completed Ranger School.

In September 2003, Vasquez deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with 1st

Bde. 1st Inf. Div. Vasquez's awards include the Purple Heart (posthumously), Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Army Good Conduct

Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge and the Expert Infantry Badge. Vasquez is survived by his wife, Nicole, a daughter and son and his father, Guadalupe.



## Soldiers continued from page 1

Shull died of non-hostile gunshot wounds. The incident is under investigation.

He is the 15th Fort Riley Soldier who has died while serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Fort Riley commanders, Soldiers, civilian employees and Family Readiness Groups are providing ongoing assistance to all families of Soldiers supporting the war effort and are prepared to continue around the clock assistance throughout this operation.

### FORT RILEY POST

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Staff Writers-Spc. William Biles, Spc. Christopher Selmeck, Sam Robinson  
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# Holdovers continued from page 1

agement team and the commander, Co. A, 6025th GSU. "The 6025th GSU and the case management team make it clear to the Medical Holdover Soldiers that making their medical appointments is their priority," said Manza. "It is set up in their work agreement that it is a 'must' to get to their doctor's appointment."

According to Maj. Dannie Percifull, officer in charge and Reserve Component case manager, IACH, the keystone is to follow up on the Soldier's treatment plan, ensure that it is completed and get the Soldier Returned To Duty or a Release From Active Duty.

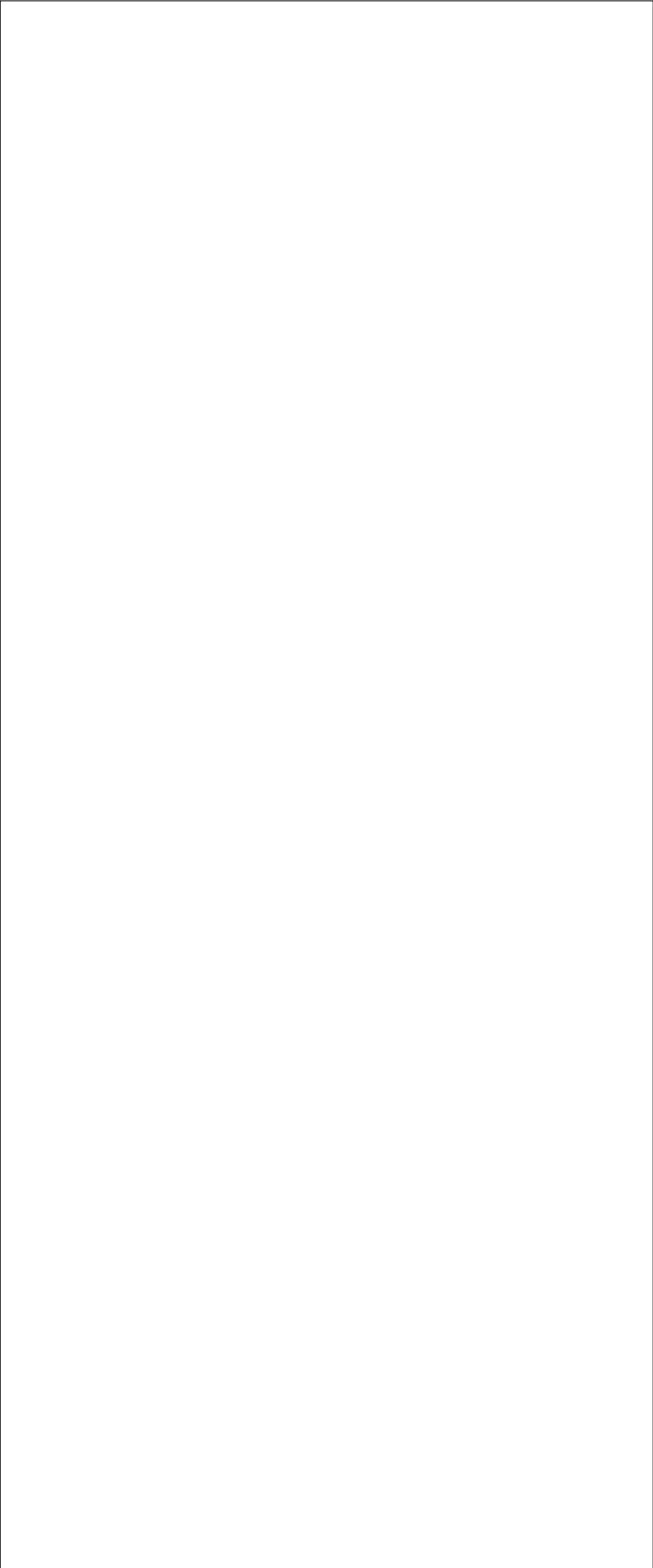
"What I am coming around to do is to check the administrative and medical needs — to ascertain if the administrative side is linked to the Soldiers' medical treatment plans and determinations are made for fitness for duty or the Soldiers' medical issues are documented in their medical records," said Fox during a meeting with the post's Medical Holdover Soldiers at their barracks.

Fox explained that the administrative process for the Reserve or National Guard Soldiers presents a challenge when dealing with Soldiers' medical treatment plans and their orders. For example, if the Soldiers are with the Army National Guard or the U.S. Army Reserve components, the termination date of their active duty orders may conflict with their medical treatment plans that may require 60 or 90 days of follow-up care.

The administrative process involves requesting an extension of the Soldiers' orders from their state and the Reserve component to ensure that the Soldiers continue to receive their pay and TRICARE health benefits.

From October 2002 to October 2003, the total number of mobilized Reserve Component and National Guard Soldiers at Fort Riley was 6,787. Of this number, 2,736 have been demobilized. In the same time period, the total number of Soldiers who were Medical Holdover or Active Duty Medical Extensions was 305, of which 167 have cleared. The term Active Duty Medical Extension refers to the Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve servicemembers who require retention beyond their unit's date for demobilization and pending the resolution of their medical conditions, subject to their and the Department of Army's consent.

As of Oct. 25, 2003, there were 138 Medical Holdovers and Active Duty Medical Extensions at Fort Riley, according Martin.





# Briefs

## Holiday Tree Lighting

The post Holiday Tree Lighting will be held Dec. 5, 4:45 p.m. at Ware Parade Field, in front of Building 500. Santa Claus will visit and there will be light refreshments.

## Thanksgiving Service

There will be a post-wide Ecu-menical Worship Service Nov. 26, 11:45 a.m., at Kapauu Chapel. The service is for Soldiers, family members and civilian workers on Fort Riley.

## Thanksgiving Meal Hours

The hours at the post dining facilities for Thanksgiving Day are: Main Post DFAC - Breakfast, 6 - 7 a.m.; Lunch, 12 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Dinner, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.; 1st Brigade DFAC - Breakfast, 6 - 7 a.m.; Lunch, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Dinner, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. and 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery DFAC - Breakfast, 6 - 7 a.m.; Lunch, 12 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Dinner, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

## Thrift Shop

The Fort Riley Thrift Shop has a large selection of previously owned articles, from clothing to house wares to furniture. There will be a 50 percent off Christmas Sale on donated Christmas items Dec. 2 - 18. Visit building 267, Stuart Avenue (next to the stables) Tuesday - Thursday, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., and the first Saturday of each month, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Con-signor-Customer Appreciation Day is tomorrow. Items for consignment are

accepted on Tuesdays; donations are accepted everyday. For more information on needed items or to schedule a pickup for large items, call 784-3874.

## The Shoppe

The Shoppe is a quaint gift shop located in building 259, Stuart Ave., 239-2783. The Holiday hours of operation are 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Tuesday - Friday, 4 - 8 p.m. Thursday nights and 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday. Come browse the extensive collection of antiques, collectibles and gifts. All fall and

Halloween items are on sale!

## EFMP Holiday Celebration

The Exceptional Family Member Program Holiday Celebration will be held on Dec 9 at the Ogden Community Center, 220 Willow Street, Ogden, 6 - 8:30 pm. Families will need to bring a salad or dessert. All military families who have a special needs family member are invited to attend. Operation Santa Claus will provide a gift for all children attending. Families

need to R.S.V.P. to the EFMP office, 239-9435, Dec. 2. Families need to be enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program.

## Thanksgiving Dinner

The Geary County Latino Organization Inc. has invited those who are far away from family and friends to a family Thanksgiving Dinner on Nov. 22, 4 - 8 p.m., at the National Guard Armory, 500 Airport Road, Junction City. For information, call 762-2703 OR 238-8209.

# Gunnery continued from page 1

said 2nd Lt Logan Brewer, head-quarters platoon sergeant, Company A.

As with some military training programs, the concept is to learn the basics before moving into more complex training.

The same is to be said for this type of training. The tankers start off on Table I and work their way up. "This process gives the tank crews a chance to make any changes while preparing for this type of qualification," said Brewer, who added that this qualification is the Superbowl of gunnery.

According to globalsecurity.org, training tables are designed to establish a common standard for skills. The qualification tables add structure to unit training plans, articulate combat readiness and help units compete for installation ranges and resources. The tables also assist the unit by outlining a training-readiness evaluation strategy for an individual, a crew and a platoon. Establishing training and evaluation standards for individuals, crews and platoons allows for making efficient use of training

resources, articulating readiness and, most importantly, ensuring a consistent battlefield result.

Tables V through VIII train and evaluate a crew on the skills it is required to execute, with Tank Table VIII being the Intermediate Qualification Course.

Some of the things which make Table VIII unique and difficult, are the different types of enemy targets and reaction times to make the engagement.

"Target acquisition is a big challenge," said 2nd Lt. Daniel Eakins, assistant S-2 for the bat-

talion. "The mix of targets includes tanks, personnel carriers and troops, all of which have to be engaged with different weapons systems, switching back and forth from main gun to machine guns. There are stationary and moving targets that need to be engaged within seconds."

According to Eakins, every crew in the battalion qualified, which was a great reward for their efforts to this point.

The Dreadnaughts recently completed a National Training Center rotation. Some of the Sol-

diers believe their training at NTC, as well as this gunnery, will make them very well rounded.

"We did something different at NTC this time," said Brewer. "We trained on a lot of tactics that we would face if we were in Iraq. It was more of civilians on the battlefield and check point procedures and stuff like that. Now, put this gunnery on top of that, and the result will be much more well-rounded tankers."

"It is important to make sure that tank crews maintain their proficiency with their weapon sys-

tem, just as it's important for every Soldier to maintain proficiency in their particular specialty," said Eakins. "Tanks in Iraq are still being used to man check-points, protect supply routes and convoys, and ... in counter-insurgency operations."

The battalion is now finished with Table VIII, and they are preparing for Table XII. Table XII is the qualification table for the individual platoons. "Table XII gives the chance for the platoon leaders and platoon sergeants to get graded," said Brewer.

# Memorial continued from page 1

ry of their fallen comrades.

"Our band of brothers has suffered a tragic loss," he said. "It is okay to mourn the loss of Collins and Vasquez. They would be the first to say that it is okay to mourn the loss of our fellow brothers, but to not use their deaths to lose sight of or not continue to complete our mission. So, we honor their memory by continuing to grieve their loss while continuing to complete our mission to the same standards that they would expect if they were here."

Lt. Col. Marshal Hagen, battalion commander, 1st Bn., 504th Inf., 82nd Abn. Div., also spoke of honoring the memory of Collins and Vasquez.

"We honor the memory of Collins and Vasquez as a task force because that is what we

are," he said. "We are a combined arms team. Over the past two months, the paratroopers of 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry Regiment and the Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment have fought side by side and bonded into an unbeatable task force. Therefore, we stand today, side by side, to pay tribute to two great friends and Soldiers... They were two superb combat leaders. We mourn their loss today, but will forever honor their courage and their commitment as Iron Rangers and as Soldiers of Task Force 1-504. We are honored to have served with such great Americans."

Sgt. 1st Class Jason Weatherholtz, Co. A, 1st Bn., 16th Inf., gave his thoughts about what he would say to Collins' children.

"Your father was a hero," he said. "He made the ultimate sacrifice for his country and for you. He was protecting his fellow Soldiers from danger, and he kept them safe."

He also spoke to Vasquez's children.

The heroism your father displayed was immeasurable. He truly loved his family and, at the same time, provided the leadership that was required to keep his Soldiers well trained and ready for anything."

Chaplain (Capt) Samuel Bowersock spoke to the Soldiers of Task Force 1-504 about the legacy of America's Soldiers.

"It's difficult to imagine what the United States, America the

beautiful, would be like if it did not have in its midst those of us who are willing to fight to protect the freedoms that our great country offers," he said. "Our great country has been blessed by generations of brave men and women who unhesitatingly sacrificed even their lives so that their fellow Americans might enjoy the fruits of liberty. Suffice it to say, if they had not answered their nation's call, this world would be a very different place."

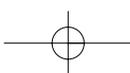
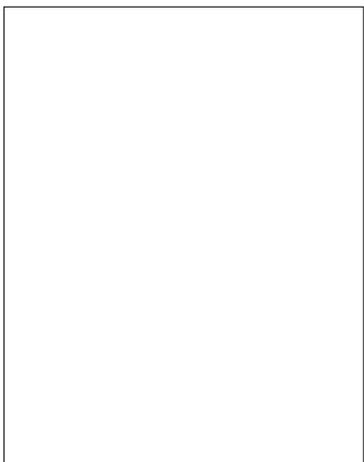
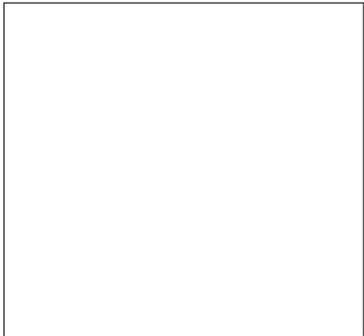
Bowersock also spoke about the significance of holding the memorial on Veterans Day.

"It is a Veterans Day that we will always remember," he said. "It is a Veterans Day that will change our perspective of Veter-

ans Day for the rest of our lives. Today, we honor those men and women whose personal sacrifices have preserved our nation through the toughest of times... For America's veterans, for Task Force 1-504's veterans, Sgt. 1st Class Collins and Staff Sgt. Vasquez truly deserve the thanks of a

grateful nation. We proclaim that appreciation to them today. For they gave the ultimate sacrifice, they gave their very lives.

The traditional last roll was called by 1st Sgt. Greg Westbrook, just before the 21-gun salute was fired and "Taps" was played.





# Let your opinion be heard with Interactive Customer Evaluation system

By Steven Cooke  
19th PAD

In an effort to provide the best possible customer satisfaction, Fort Riley implemented the Department of Defense Interactive Customer Evaluation system.

"ICE is a tool to allow the customer to communicate with service providers regarding service provided," said Betty Banner, management analyst, Plans, Analysis and Integration. "The customer may want to make a suggestion or express satisfaction or dissatisfaction about service provided." ICE allows them to do just that.

To access this tool, go to the Fort Riley website and click the ICE link on the left

side of the homepage. Services are grouped into service categories like Administration, Education and Shopping. Under these categories, customers can evaluate services like leisure and recreation, retail, administrative and training.

Customers will rate their chosen service on a scale provided. An explanation of their experience with the service provider may also be provided in a text box.

"Within less than one minute your comment is sent to the service provider manager," Banner said.

Customers can elect to sign their name to the evaluation, or not. "This provides a level of anonymity," she said.

Banner said her office encourages ser-

vice providers to respond to customer evaluations, but it is voluntary. "We ask service providers to respond within three working days," said Banner.

Even if the service provider does not respond to the customer, the service provider still needs to take the information into consideration.

"Directrates brief the garrison commander quarterly on customers feedback from ICE," said Banner.

The ICE system is a DoD managed system, so installations of all services are able to participate. Banner said Fort Riley's participation is voluntary.

One of the best things about ICE, Banner said, is that it is a world wide system, available 24 hours a day, seven days a

week. Also, Fort Riley customers can evaluate services they received at any installation in the system and not just Fort Riley. If customers visit the ICE DoD page, they can click to any installation website. This can come in handy when a Soldier goes TDY or wants to comment on services he or she used during a PCS move.

For service providers, Banner said the system is good for the information it provides them.

"Because the system is world wide, service providers can compare themselves to other service providers, at other installations, providing the same service," said Banner.

When making an evaluation, Banner

said customers should keep one thing in mind. "The more specific they can be, the better," explained Banner. "If you say, 'Good idea' or 'Bad job.' It doesn't tell the service provider what you liked or disliked."

Banner also said customers should understand the kind of system ICE is. "It's not a complaint system," she said.

"It's a customer feedback system. A feedback system is a facilitator of communication between the customer and the service provider."

Currently, Banner said, Fort Riley is at an 80-85 percent satisfaction rate. She said the post should be aiming at an 85 percent or better. To access the ICE DoD website, go to: <http://ice.disa.mil>

## Suicide continued from page 1

never thought like that before. I knew it was wrong, but I didn't really care. I just wouldn't do that to my mom though."

A few weeks later, after having thought about suicide several more times, Matthew said he made an appointment at Mental Health.

"I really didn't want my unit to know," said Matthew, who feared his peers and his NCOs would consider him weak and less a Soldier for having those thoughts.

"Talking to someone who listened helped," said Matthew about the counselors at Mental Health. "I could have told friends, but they don't know what's going on medically."

Matthew said he has had several setbacks in his treatment since he referred himself to Mental Health.

He said he went AWOL when a counselor missed scheduled an appointment for him and didn't show up.

"I thought the system failed me at that point," said Matthew. "I just got in my truck and drove home."

Through the efforts of Matthew's battalion commander and his NCOs, he said he is being seen by counselors in Topeka and on Fort Riley and currently taking medications.

"More people die from suicide than from homicide in the United States," said Bill Powers, chief, Soldier and Family Support Center. "In 1997, 30,535 Americans took their own lives. In contrast, 19,491 were homicide victims. On aver-

age, 84 Americans commit suicide each day, and there have been more suicides than homicides each year since 1950," said Powers.

"In 1997, suicide was the eighth leading cause of death in this country. It was the fourth leading cause of death among 25 to 44-year-olds," he said.

Powers said that in the 1990s, the Army lost an equivalent of an entire battalion task force to suicides.

Powers points out, however that there are fundamental reasons a person considers taking his life.

"They are in psychological and emotional pain," said Powers. "People who consider suicide may be depressed, angry, feel lonely, rejected or are dealing with a significant loss, such as a relationship or death of a loved one."

Powers said for individuals who are suffering, suicide appears to be the only way to stop the pain.

Chap. (Lt. Col.) Karl Kuckhahn, deputy installation chaplain, echoes Powers, but adds that a person having attempted suicide in the past is more likely to attempt it again.

"According to ASSIST, a new training program for suicide prevention on Fort Riley, the sign which most highly correlates with someone who is suicidal is previous attempts," said Kuckhahn.

"There are a host of other warning signs which include, depression, significant loss in a relationship, finances or

career." Kuckhahn said changes in work performance, attire and personality are also warning signs for potential suicides.

Kuckhahn said that although chaplains are trained in identifying potential suicidal Soldiers and everyone in the Army should know what to look for.

"All Soldiers who inprocess Fort Riley are trained in the basics of identifying warning signs. It is important that all Soldiers be aware, since chaplains and the chain of command do not always know the Soldier as well as their fellow Soldiers," said Kuckhahn. "Referrals are the key."

Capt. Nicole Doyle is a staff psychologist with Mental Health. She counsels Soldiers on a daily basis for depression and suicidal tendencies.

"The Department of Behavioral Health provides mental health counseling on a walk-in basis for emergencies, on-call services through the ER for after hours and weekend crisis management," said Doyle.

For people who are considering suicide, Powers recommends seeking help fast.

"If individuals need a number or location of a service provider on Fort Riley, they can call the SFSC Information and Referral number at 239-9435. The SFSC, in building 7264 on Custer Hill, is open during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.," said Powers.

"All deployed units from Fort Riley have rear detachments co-located with the SFSC. The rear detachments are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week," he added.

Additionally, Soldiers and family members can contact their chaplain, mental health or the Irwin Army hospital emergency room. A chaplain help line is 239-HELP.

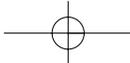
For Matthew, the fight is not over, but he said he's feeling better now that he's received help.

"I'm getting better," said the Soldier as he climbed into his truck. "I'm going to be okay."

Then, something memorable happened... he smiled. It wasn't one of those big toothy grins, but another milestone.

## Signs to watch for

- A bad evaluation for an enlisted Soldier or officer
- The break up of a close relationship.
- Drug or alcohol abuse.
- Renewal of bonding with family on return from long field training or an isolated tour.
- Leaving old friends.
- Being alone with concerns about self and family.
- Financial stressors.
- New military assignments.
- Recent interpersonal losses.
- Loss of self-esteem/status.
- Humiliation.
- Rejection (e.g., job, promotion, boy/girlfriend).
- Disciplinary or legal difficulty.
- Suicide of a friend or family member.
- Discharge from treatment or from service.
- Retirement.



# Fort Riley Honor Guard donates horses to local organizations

By William Biles  
Staff Writer

The Fort Riley Honor Guard donated five horses recently to several organizations in various communities so they will be able to take it easy during their retirement years.

The organizations are non-profit agencies that will offer the steeds a less strenuous role, while tending to the needs of their patrons.

"There are a total of five horses being donated to non-profit organizations that usually use horses for simple tasks - walking, trail rides or around arenas," said Ron Roller, horse trainer, Fort Riley Honor Guard.

For an organization to receive a military horse, they must meet some requirements and be aware of some stipulations that come with receiving the mount.

"Basically, to receive a horse from us, the organization needs to be non-profit, then they need to come here and evaluate the horse to make sure it is right for their organization," said Roller.

"Since we are in the public's eye, how we perform and how we look is very important to how we represent Fort Riley and the Army. We want to make sure we have the best of the best in the front," Roller said.

But more than image, there is another reason why the Honor Guard chose to donate the animals rather than destroy them.

"I think... it is better to let the horse move on to another organization rather than putting the horse down. We are the caretakers of these animals, and we will do what is best for them, so we have a moral obligation to make sure

we are doing the right thing - preserving life and the integrity of each animal that leaves its commission here," said Roller.

The horses are not just thrown into their new role; the organization receiving the horse will examine it.

"These horses are worked into the organizations program. They are not just thrown out there where anybody can just get on them. The staff there will check and evaluate the horses and then proceed from there," Roller said.

Words cannot do justice to the appreciation some of the organizations have for being able to receive the mounts.

"This is the first time receiving a horse from Fort Riley and the experience has been wonderful," said Marilyn Foltz, director and president, Lonesome Dove Therapeutic Riding Center, Abilene.

"I can't even begin to tell you how much I appreciate this opportunity. Never would I have thought that I would have received such a wonderful deal like I have here."

The Soldiers feel the sting of letting go of the animals that became part of their military life.

"Soldiers, after working with these horses for some time, develop a great bond with these animals. Many of them (Soldiers) would love to take these horses home, but we can't get in the middle of that," said Roller.

"The soldiers don't really get over the feelings they have when a horse leaves, but I think it wears off with time. I think they grip onto these horses tightly, but I think they are proud to see them move on and do something a little bit easier during their retirement years," he said.

That training and time put into the horses, by the Soldiers, is the reason Foltz accepted the invitation to receive a horse for her organization.

"I am coming here for a horse because the Army's horses are fool-proof because they are fully trained, and they are people horses," she said.

"I couldn't ask for anything better, because what I would normally have to do is spend 60 to 90 hours on a horse, training it to put a child on it. But now, all I have to do is take (the horse) back and get it use to toys and stuff, and to me, the hard part (training) is already over with."

The Honor Guard is hoping, if their budget allows, to replace the herd with horses already trained for their mission, so they will be able to focus on just training the Soldier rather than both.

"Ideally, our goal is to replace most of the herd, in due time, with better horses. Bare-in-mind, that Soldiers have trained a lot of these horses and these horses have been ridden by a lot of different people," said Roller.

"We don't want the Soldier training the horse. We want the horse to be trained to allow the Soldier the opportunity to learn how to ride. Mixing the two, an untrained horse and an untrained Soldier, sets them both up for failure. It sets the Soldier up for getting hurt - a horse for not understanding its proper commands and cues," he said.

"It also gives the new Soldiers to the unit problems handling that animal. We are trying to correct all of these measures to make it safe," he said.

Overall, donating horses to the agencies is viewed as a win-win situation.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for Fort Riley to reach out to the communities and give some support to the non-profit horse organizations that could use a horse or two to keep their organizations going," Roller said.

He concluded saying "I think this will be a benefit to the Army, as much as it is to the civilians."



Marilyn Foltz, director and president, Lonesome Dove Therapeutic Riding Center, Abilene, talks to Ron Roller, horse trainer, Fort Riley Honor Guard, about "Thunder," a military mount being donated to her organization.

**Thanksgiving Meal Hours**

The hours at the post dining facilities for Thanksgiving Day are: Main Post DFAC - Breakfast, 6 - 7 a.m.; Lunch, noon - 3 p.m. and Dinner, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.; 1st Brigade DFAC - Breakfast, 6 - 7 a.m.; Lunch, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Dinner, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. and 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery DFAC - Breakfast, 6 - 7 a.m.; Lunch, noon - 3 p.m. and Dinner, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.



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