

The Challenge

Sierra Army Depot, Herlong, CA

August 2004

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SIERRA STORES ARMY EXCESS TANKS

Why is Sierra Army Depot receiving tanks and armored personnel carriers (APC)? Earlier this year, Major General N. Ross Thompson, III, TACOM Commanding General, identified Sierra as the site to store excess tanks and APCs associated with the Reserve and National Guard units.

Why? Currently these items are being stored at locations that have a high storage fee that is charged to the Army. Major General Thompson

stated that Sierra Army Depot has no cost for storage of these items. Once put in their designated location, the items can sit there until such time that some type of Care of Supply in Storage of the items is needed. The climate and terrain on depot, which is low in humidity with little rainfall, is ideally suitable for storing tanks and APCs. Sierra's only cost would be the initial transportation and handling upon arrival to the depot.

There are currently over 250 APC's along with 200 tanks Sierra Army Depot is storing. Once again, the folks within the Directorate of Public Works comes through to build the staging area where these items will be stored.



Photo by Lynn Goddard

Depot employees assist in the off-loading of the tanks from the railcars.

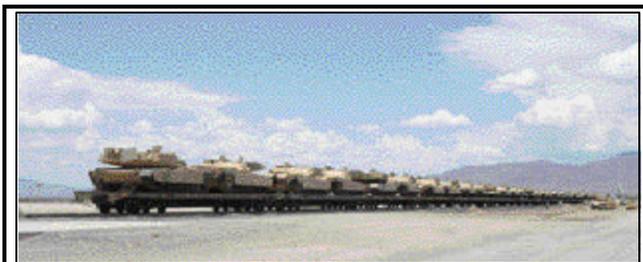


Photo by Lynn Goddard

Railcars carrying excess tanks that will be stored at Sierra Army Depot began arriving on depot early this month.

Commander Opens New Driving Range at Sierra

By Lori McDonald
Public Affairs Officer

It is not Pebble Beach or the PGA Tour, but on depot it could be considered a slice of heaven. What are we talking about? The new Driving Range that was opened up on July 6th behind the Skedaddle Inn. One of the official duties Colonel Paul Plemmons, Depot Commander accomplished upon his return from Iraq was to cut the ribbon officially commemorating the long awaited Driving Range.

The idea of putting a driving range on Sierra Army Depot began well over a year ago. With the dedicated support from the folks within the Directorate of Public Works, that idea is now a reality. The driving range is a way for employees to relax or work out some frustrations either before or after work, or even during your lunch-time. If you feel that isn't enough time, come out on the weekends.

The cost is a mere \$5.00 for four tokens. These tokens will provide you with approximately 60-65 golf balls. Markers are set up in increments of 100 feet and extend up to 500 feet. The Skedaddle Inn is working on acquiring targets to aim for to improve that "HOLE IN ONE" form.

There are many folks within the Building and Grounds Division and the Utilities Division that need to be acknowledged for the tireless effort in

making the Driving Range come true. They are Bernie Asuelo, Hugh Blosser, Larry Brown, Mike Buther, Gary Chandler, Gary Davison, Joe Paris, Ralph Schroepfer, Jerry Simpson, Jeremiah Van Meter, and Mike Win-

ters. The DPW also had some of the new summer hires spreading the rock around the driving green. They were Heather Boatwright, Jarod Boatwright, Andrew Dozier, Edith Higgins, Kristen Nasser, Geoff Pruitt, Jason Shipley,

Robert Thorne, William Wilkey, and Allen Winters.

A special thanks not only to the folks within Public Works, but the staff within the Morale Welfare and Recreation section who made this happen!



Photo by Lynn Goddard

Far right, Colonel Paul Plemmons, Depot Commander, takes the first swing on the green of the newly opened Driving Range. The range is located behind the Skedaddle Inn and is open to everyone who would like to come in and hit a few balls or improve their swing. In the background, depot employees watch as the Depot Commander shows the proper stand and swing for hitting the golf ball.

Commander's View

I would like to start out by saying that I am glad to be back and able to concentrate solely on my depot command duties. My intent is to get out in the field to look at all the new work that has come onto the depot and to see all the new employees that have hired on since my absence.

SAFETY

During my time in Iraq, I reviewed the police blotters that revealed numerous vehicle accidents. In order to get a handle on these accidents and bring the numbers down, I have instructed the staff to start cracking down by initiating report of surveys and holding individuals accountable. Also remember that everyone must wear his or her seatbelts while driving or riding in a motor vehicle.

On a different note regarding safety, think about the heat. Make sure you drink enough water. It is very easy to become dehydrated. When you're outside, whether at work or play, take precautions to prevent sunburn. When the sun comes out and temperatures begin to rise, make sure you take



Colonel Paul R. Plemmons proper precautions so you get maximum pleasure with minimal pain.

TANKS

We have started receiving M1A1 Tanks and various Armored Personnel Carriers here at Sierra Army Depot. The numbers vary as to the total volume we will be receiving. However, this is a good mission for Sierra and continues to show our Military Worth. The dollars we are saving the U.S. Government are astronomical. We have instituted a safety program in

the off-loading area and I encourage each of you to use precaution if you have to be in that area. Secondly, most of these tanks are being received by rail car, so be careful crossing all railroad tracks.

On August 19th, we will break from our daily routine to spend some time on important topics: Safety, Security and Legal. A great deal of information will be available in class and at booths. I encourage you to practice what you learn in the morning as you enjoy the afternoon of fun. In particular, if you plan to drink, don't drive!

In closing I would like to give thanks to the creative minds of Lori McDonald, Sherie Underwood, and Sue Ritz. Sierra Army Depot was represented this year at the Lassen County Fair by "Sierra" the art cow. I had the opportunity to walk down Main Street in the parade with Lori and Sue showing off our perfect cow. All the hard work and dedication paid off, as "Sierra" took first place. Congratulations ladies on a job well done!

Bureau of Prison Holds Local Job Fair in Herlong

On September 8, 2004 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. the Federal Bureau of Prisons will host a job fair at their new site: Federal Correctional Institution, 741-925 Herlong Access Road, A-25, Herlong, California.

The Bureau of Prisons offers Career Opportunities in the following areas: Correctional Officer, Human Resources, Mechanical Services, Secretarial, Education, Psychologist, Computer Services, Medical Officers, Recreation, and Food Services

In accordance with 5 U.S.C 3307, a maximum entry age of 36 has been established for initial appointment to a position in a Bureau of Prisons institution.

Point of contact is Ms. Sheryl Prier, AHRA (925) 803-4713 or Ms. Patricia Meynardie, HRS (925) 803-4712.

Visit the FBOP website at www.bop.gov/recruit.html For additional job listings, visit the OPM website at www.usajobs.opm.gov

The Union's Position: AFGÉ, Local 1808

Safety is everybody's concern while at work.

There have been incidents that have occurred that could affect us in completing our mission, such as: an increase in, on the job injuries, vehicle and forklift accidents, incidents of drug and alcohol abuse, etc. At some time during this past year the work force has had training on these issues and the consequences that would follow if you indulge in these prohibitive actions or fail to follow safety procedures. If we have problems with the work force not willing to comply with guidelines set forth and management spends most of their time dealing with employees that don't want to comply with the guidelines, it affects our mission and will ultimately affect the Soldiers we support.

If you have an accident with a Government vehicle or Material Handling Equipment a report of survey will



Jim Swistowicz, President be initiated and you could be held liable for any damage to government property and disciplinary action can be taken for violating Sierra Army Depot's safety policy. The Depot is in the process of hiring 120 temp employees. The

workload continues to increase so there will be more movement of materials and equipment, which means there will be a potential for more accidents to occur. If you are not certified to operate a certain piece of equipment then don't. If you have any questions on safety in the work place get with your supervisors and they will help you or call the safety office at extension 4431.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

The Commander's Policy on Drug and Alcohol is **ZEROTOLERANCE**. If you use drugs or alcohol during duty hours you can be terminated. If you test positive for the use of a controlled substance you can be terminated. If you use a controlled substance at anytime you jeopardize the safety of your fellow workers as well as yourself. It is one of the conditions of employment to stay drug free and to provide a safe environment for yourself and fellow workers.

SPEEDING

The Law Enforcement and Security Department on Depot enforce driving on depot under California Traffic Laws. While driving on depot you are required to obey all posted speed limit signs and seat belt requirements just as you would driving off Depot. If you are pulled over for a traffic violation please be considerate, as the police officer is required to be respectful. If you fill that you were not at fault, you have the right to appear in Magistrate Court, which is held on Depot and plead your case before the judge. Remember you are required to obey all California Traffic Laws while driving on Depot.

Our monthly Union Meeting is held on the first Tuesday of the month at 5:15 p.m. at bldg. 58. The Union Office phone number is extension 5375.

The Challenge

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Public Affairs Officer/Editor—Lori McDonald
Editorial Assistant/Photographer—Lynn Goddard

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Unless otherwise noted, all articles and photographs are provided by the editorial staff. Letters to the editor and classified ads must include a name, signature and telephone number to be considered for publication. Letters may be edited to fit space.



Joint Resolution of Congress, 1971 Designating August 26 of each year as Women's Equality Day

WHEREAS, the women of the United States have been treated as second-class citizens and have not been entitled the full rights and privileges, public or private, legal or institutional, which are available to male citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the women of the United States have united to assure that these rights and privileges are available to all citizens equally regardless of sex; and

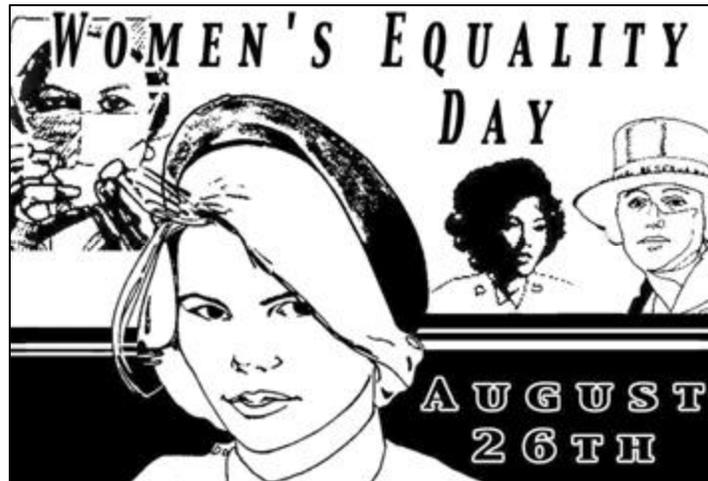
WHEREAS, the women of the United States have designated August 26, the anniversary date of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, as symbol of the continued fight for equal rights; and

WHEREAS, the women of United States are to be commended and supported in their organizations and activities,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Senate and House

of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that August 26th of each year is designated as Women's Equality Day, and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation

annually in commemoration of that day in 1920, on which the women of America were first given the right to vote, and that day in 1970, on which a nationwide demonstration for women's rights took place.



To prevent work stoppage, always remember to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment as it pertains to the job you are doing. If you have any questions, call your local Safety Office at extension 4431.

FEDS Team Recognized for Achievement



Photo Submitted

During the opening activities of the 2004 Cargo Helicopter Conference in Hunstville, Alabama, the Program Manager for CH-47 Cargo Helicopters, Colonel Tim Crosby, pictured at right, presented our Flexible Engine Diagnostic System (FEDS) Team Leader, Tim MacDonald, with a Letter of Appreciation. This letter detailed the SIAD's team performance in Upgrading the FEDS Test Cell in Kuwait. This upgrade was performed by our FEDS Team, Tim MacDonald, Mark Vandeburgh and Tom Byers in January 2004.

New Depot Engineer

Mr. Robert Gee came to work for Directorate of Public Works as a General Engineer from the city of Susanville.

Mr. Gee's previous work experience includes being a Plant Engineer for a large cement manufacturer; Industrial Engineer for a large copper smelter; and a Designer for assembly line robotics. He graduated from California State University-Long Beach, with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. Mr. Gee has received many certificates of achievements throughout his career which include but are not limited to: Energy Manager, Quality Management, Machinery Inspection and Correction Training, Continuous Improvement Specialist, Vibration Analyst, and OSHA/MSHA Safety Specialist.

His wife, Stephanie is an 18-year veteran for the City of Shasta Lake-Public Works as a Leadsman and 4-year old daughter Cydney, just stays home and runs the household.

The family enjoys hunting, fishing, golfing, camping and spending time on their beautiful 8 acre ranch.

Stop by Building 75 and welcome Bob Gee as a member of Sierra Army Depot, or give him a call at extension 4679.

Public Works, GIS, GPS, and CMMS

What does it mean for Sierra Army Depot?

By Larry Duncan
Facility Management Technician

The Directorate of Public Works is implementing a GIS and GPS, and is bringing on board a CMMS program. What are these acronyms? What do they mean? What does it mean for Sierra?

GIS

GIS stands for "Geographical Information System". There are many definitions of a GIS, one that is appropriate for our installation is "automated systems for the capture, storage, retrieval, analysis, and display of spatial data". The word spatial means, "related to the space around us".

The history of GIS goes back quite some time, actually dating back many centuries to the beginnings of General-purpose maps dealing with issues of topography, the lay of the land, and transportation features such as roads and rivers. It was the field of planning that first began to exploit maps by extracting data from one map to place them on another.

During the 1960's many new types of maps were becoming available in standardized scales from sources like the U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and private sources. It became fairly straightforward to select the right maps, trace off a layer, or photographically build a "separation" for one type of feature on the map, and then to combine the layers mechanically.

The GIS as we know it today came into its own with the development of the modern computer in 1959. The present day GIS is a very powerful tool allowing the planner to overlay topographic features such as land contours, roads, power lines, etc., all on the planners personal computer unlike the days prior to computers when maps were spread on large tables on top of the other to achieve the layering, this task is now accomplished by simply toggling on or off a theme (layer).

The GIS can also store data pertinent to a specific spot or location in a database; this data is referred to as attributes. A well-featured GIS will allow the user to query the database to find the required information. Other

features may include buffering where the user can instruct the program to place a buffer of any size around an object such as a building and query the GIS as to what inferences occur within the specified buffer. These interferences can be underground utilities, underground storage tanks, overhead power lines, water lines, etc.

GPS

The acronym GPS means **Geographical Positioning System**. The definition of a GPS is: **A system of satellites, computers, and receivers that is able to determine the latitude and longitude of a receiver on Earth by calculating the time difference for signals from different satellites to reach the receiver.** In laymen's terms it simply means that with the aid of some satellites, a radio signal and receiver to receive the signal, one can pinpoint themselves as to their location on the earth. Not only can you pinpoint your location, you can also establish an accurate elevation above sea level at your location.

Last year Public Works completed the installation of a GPS base station. A base station's (sometimes called a reference station) purpose is to collect data from a rover or mobile receiver that is collecting data during a field session. The base station is a fixed point that is constantly calculating for the error for each satellite and, through differential correction, improves the accuracy of GPS positions collected at unknown locations by a roving GPS receiver.

The depots roving receiver is equipped with a data logger which enables the operator to store data in addition to the GPS data already collected. This data can be anything the operator feels is important to the GPS database or a requirement. Data collected might be the condition of a roadbed at a given location (important for Roads and Grounds Div.), Utilities Div. may want to locate water valve locations and the data collected could be things such as date of installation, last exercised, current condition and so on. Environmental might want to enter archeological data for a given point, engineering may want to set elevations for new water lines and spot interfer-

ences such as trees to better enable them to establish the most efficient route. The data collected can then be downloaded into a GIS as an Attribute Table for a layer or in GIS terms, a Theme.

Now that all this data is entered into the GIS it is a very simple task with training for a user to access the themes, a maintain, an update the data, and use it for planning purposes, which is the main purpose of a GIS. As an added feature the depot also purchased a module called ArcIMS. ArcIMS is accessed through the depot intranet and has all the data stored in the GIS and since it is on the intranet in "DPW2" any employee who has access to a computer can access it. Though ArcIMS is a GIS of sorts, it does not give the user the ability to alter the data only Base Support GIS will do that and only authorized personnel can access that program.

CMMS

CMMS is an acronym for Computerized Maintenance Management System. The software will allow the user to track many facets of an equipment's existence. A powerful CMMS has the ability to track the operational and maintenance history of components within a system. For instance a production facility has a ventilation system that provides comfort to its workers which translates into improved production. This ventilation system has components that make up the system, some components have a life span, i.e.: electric motors, this life span, or useful life, is either determined by history or industry standards. The motor then can be metered to measure its use and when it nears the end of its useful life the CMMS notifies the facility managers that the unit is near failing, the manager then issues a work order to have the shop replace the motor at a time when production is least affected. Some of the high-end CMMS programs actually issue the work order automatically when the equipment nears the end of its useful life, eliminating a step of human tasking freeing the manager to attend to items of more importance. In some of the larger facilities this could be significant time savings for the manager and all facilities with any kind of industrial

complex benefit from having their equipment maintained in a proactive manner rather than a reactive manner.

This is an example of planned versus unplanned maintenance.

As planned maintenance increases unplanned maintenance decreases. Maintenance costs decrease, equipment life increases, productivity increases, and emergency breakdowns decrease.

The industry average for savings is 15-20% of the total maintenance budget with the installation and operation of a modern multi-functional Computerized Maintenance Management System.

The last question to be answered is what does GIS, GPS, and CMMS have in common? What GIS and GPS have in common has already been answered, so how does the CMMS tie in with the overall picture? CMMS that has the ability to interface with a GIS will be able to not only issue a work order but also issue a map locating that specific piece of equipment in the spatial world making the mechanics job a lot less difficult. The GIS will also be able to communicate with the CMMS on the data collected in the field. The field technician collecting the data with a GPS can spatially locate that motor on the ventilation system we talked about, and with the data logger get an approximate date of installation, and with that, arrive at an estimated usage to date. Other data collected would be part number, motor size, pulley sizes, etc. That information then enters the GIS and is stored in that database and then goes into the CMMS where that program starts measuring the mortality on the motor.

Sierra has one half of the puzzle in place, that being the GPS and GIS, the next piece will be the CMMS and should be onboard and functioning by the end of summer. The final piece will be the GIS/CMMS interface module, which has not been scheduled at the time of this printing. When all the pieces are in place, Public Works will be more efficient in supporting the depot requirements, which will allow SIAD to be more timely and efficient in providing the Soldier in the field the best asset possible.



EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY

SAFETY/SECURITY/LEAN/LEGAL

AUGUST 19

6:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Training

12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Break

12:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Employee Day Festivities

Training

Information

Exercise

Fun

Food

Entertainment

Get it all in one day



Colonel Paul Plemmons, Depot Commander, left presents the American Flag to Richard Fleckenstein during his retirement ceremony. Mr. Fleckenstein retires after 16 years of federal service.



After 30 plus years of federal service, Mr. Joe Stauffer, left, glows with happiness upon receiving his retirement certificate from Vince Sabatino, Civilian Executive Assistant. Mr. Stauffer began his career in February 1974 in Tooele, Utah. He came to Sierra in January 1994 as a Welder Leader for Operational Stocks Division. Years later Mr. Stauffer was promoted to the position of Welder Supervisor where he stayed until his retirement. Upon retiring, Mr. Stauffer and wife, Regina plan to move back to Utah to be close to their grandchildren.

Photos by Lynn Goddard



Michael Sweet, Garrison Manager, far left, presents a retirement certificate to out-going Fire Inspector, Steve Emery, (center) for his 26 years of dedicated service to the Federal Government, as Fire Chief, Daniel Murphy looks on.





After 34-years of federal service, Danny Fletcher, left, receives a well deserved retirement certificate from Vince Sabatino, Civilian Executive Assistant. Mr. Fletcher began working at Sierra Army Depot in 1980 as a Guard. Throughout the next 24 years Mr. Fletcher worked in Air Operations, Operational Stocks, up to his position as Supervisor, Mechanical Repair Branch where he then retired.



Ms. Jayne Lawrence, right is all smiles as she receives congratulations from Col. Paul Plemmons, Depot Commander, for her 25-years of continued federal service.



Picture at left shows Ms. Lori McDonald, Public Affairs Officer (standing), along with Sherei Underwood, Protocol Officer, decorating "SIERRA" for submission entry into the Lassen County Parade. Ms. Sue Ritz, Contracting Officer, was reading the local newspaper advertising the Art Cows to be entered into the County Fair and thought this would be an excellent marketing effort, not to mention getting involved with the local community. Upon approval from the Command Group, all three ladies got right to work coming up with different ideas on how to decorate "SIERRA". The effort paid off as our mascot took first place.

Ms. Sherei Underwood, left and Ms. Lori McDonald take a break before putting the finishing touches on "SIERRA" so that she can be transported to Susanville for her long walk down main street during the Lassen County Fair. See additional parade photos on page 12 for completed product.



CYS News

CONTRACTORS NEEDED!
Child and Youth Services (CYS) are still looking for certified instructors for a brand new program called SKIES, which initiates instructional classes taught by certified instructors. Certified either by years of experience or certification. The classes being offered at this time are Martial Arts, Climbing

and Rappelling, Bowling, and Tennis. If you are interested or know of someone who may be interested please contact Marsha Olsen @ 827-4696.

It's getting near the end of summer, have you gone on vacation? Looking for a chance to get away? Well this is it, CYS is hosting two family trips this month. The first trip is scheduled for

August 5, at Wild Island Adventure Park in Reno to celebrate National Kids Day. Then it's off to Eagle Lake on August 18, where you and your family can enjoy a picnic lunch, swimming, and sea-dos. Hope to see you there! For more info on signing up to become a member or interested in going on a trip please call 530-827-4696.

CYS summer hours: SAS – Mon.-Thurs. 6 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.

YS- (Middle School) Mon.-Thurs. 1 p.m.-5 p.m.; Fri. 2 p.m.-5 p.m.; Sat. 1 p.m.- 5 p.m.

(Teens) Mon.-Thurs. 1 p.m.- 7 p.m.; Fri. 2 p.m.-9 p.m.; Sat. 1 p.m.-9 p.m.

CYS would also like to introduce Curtis Fountain, pictured at left, our new CYMS Technician. Curtis is a native of Susanville and graduated with his Associates Degree from Lassen community College this past May. We are proud to have a CYMS Technician and would like to welcome Curtis to our team!



MWR Services

Skedaddle Inn Conference Center

The Skedaddle Inn Conference Center/Lounge is open Thursday, 5:00 p.m. until the last customer leaves. It is also equipped to cater large or small events.

Call the manager at 4360 or email: raul.granados@sierra.army.mil The business hours are Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sierra Lodge/Guest House

Call the lodging manager, 4544, or email: raul.granados@sierra.army.mil for information.

Sierra Bowling Center and Snack Bar

Open everyday, 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Call 4442 for information. Check out the Lunch Specials Monday through Thursday. Delivery available on all orders received before 10:45 a.m. Contact Jackie Weston-Chase to book your birthday packages and holiday parties. Dates fill up quick so plan early.

Physical Fitness Center

Open Monday through Thursday, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The only charge to individuals is \$3 for use of the Racquetball Court (per hour).

IIR is available at the Physical Fitness Center. For more information call 4655 or email ok.fern@sierra.army.mil

Outdoor Recreation and Equipment Rental

For reservations and information call Chris Long, 4354.

Laundromat

Open daily, 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. in building 142. Cost for wash, \$1.25 and .25 cents (15 minute drying). For your convenience, there is a machine with laundry supplies located inside the facility and also a change machine.

Recycling Center

Open Monday through Thursday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call 4504.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

Administrative Assistant can be reached at 4797, Mon.-Thurs. from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or email her at regina.stauffer@sierra.army.mil. Business Office can be reached at 4178 or 4609.

New Fort Sage Family Resource Center Director



Fort Sage Family Resource Center would like to proudly introduce their new Director, Quin Miller. Originally from Bakersfield, California, Mr. Miller attended Ventura College before transferring to the University of Santa Barbara California where he attained a degree in Business Marketing. After graduation, he ran a marketing team for a local non-profit organization, and worked as a student counselor for George Page Youth Center in Santa Barbara before moving to Lassen County. Now as the director of the FRC, he hopes to use his skills and abilities to make the resource center a great success in the South County communities with your help and support. Fort Sage Family Resource Center 530-827-3007.

New Programs for the Fort Sage Family Resource Center!!!

The Fort Sage Family Resource Center (FRC) is excited about the new programs starting in July. The FRC has recently made July 2004 our official "Senior Awareness" month. In addition to the on going programs, we are proud to introduce our newly revised Medication Pick-up, Precious Cargo Transportation service, and the new "Senior Wake-up Call."

Every morning, at a time you designate a member of FRC staff or volunteer will telephone you. Our staff will inquire about your immediate health needs, and well being. If you seem to

be in distress, staff will call necessary contacts and if needed, 911. Your Wake-up call will also provide friendly information regarding fall prevention, health issues, and community resources. Any Lassen County Resident who is: A senior citizen, person with a disability, an individual living alone, or a caregiver needing support can participate, and be a part of our wonderful program.

Our Medication Pick-up service was designed to take the stress out of picking up prescriptions. After initially registering, simply fax, email, call in, or

drop your prescription by the FRC, and we will make a trip to your Rite Aid or Wal-Mart pharmacies in Susanville for you! Just come by the FRC and they will be waiting for here you.

Stop by the Fort Sage Family Resource Center to see what other programs are available for you and your family. For any questions, resource, volunteer, or service information please call (530) 827-3007.

Ask about our 0-5 activities and future projects.

Rules Restrict Political Activity for DoD People

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2004 — With election activity steadily picking up, defense officials remind members of the military and Defense Department civilians that they're subject to rules regulating their involvement in political activities.

Gone are the days when the military posted troops at the polls after the Civil War, an act that Steve Epstein, director of the DoD General Counsel's Standards of Conduct Office, said intimidated many southerners into not voting.

Today, Epstein said two sets of rules help protect the integrity of the political process: a DoD directive for active-duty service members and the Hatch Act for federal civilians. These rules keep the military out of partisan politics and ensure that the workplace remains politically neutral, he said.

That's not to imply that military members and civilian employees can't participate in politics. Epstein said DoD encourages both groups to register to vote and vote as they choose, and to urge others to vote. Both groups can sign nominating petitions for candidates and express their personal opinions about candidates and issues — but only if they don't do so as representatives of the armed forces. Also, all federal employees can make contributions to political organizations or candidates.

Beyond that, the list of dos and don'ts differs widely, depending on whether the employee is an active-duty service member, a rank-and-file Civil Service employee, a political appointee or member of the career Senior Executive Service, Epstein said.

Of all DoD employees, the men and women in uniform have the most

restrictions regarding political activity, he explained. A 1993 revision to the Hatch Act freed most Civil Service employees to engage in political activities outside the workplace that were once forbidden, although many restrictions still apply.

For example, service members as well as government civilians can attend political meetings or rallies. Military members can attend only as spectators and not in uniform. They're not permitted to make public political speeches, serve in any official capacity in partisan groups, or participate in partisan political campaigns or conventions.

On the other hand, civilian employees governed by the Hatch Act may be active in and speak before political gatherings or serve as officers of political parties or partisan groups. They also are permitted to manage campaigns, distribute literature, write

political articles or serve as a spokesperson for a party or candidate.

Military members generally aren't permitted to campaign for a political office. Civilian employees are, as long as it's a nonpartisan election.

While the dos and don'ts concerning political activity may vary, Epstein said the basic rules hold true for all DoD workers. They can't use their position to influence or interfere with an election. And they can never engage in political activity on the job, in a government vehicle, or while wearing an official uniform.

More details about restrictions on DoD military and civilian employees' political activities are posted on the DoD Web site.

(Editor's Note: For any questions you may have on this topic, please contact the Legal Office at 827-4548 or 827-4549)



BUCKLE UP - IT'S THE LAW!

Click IT or Ticket

Minimum Age Required to Retire for FERS Employees

What is MRA?

Is MRA another acronym you have always heard but never knew what it meant? If you are in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) this could be very important to you. MRA stands for Minimum Retirement Age.

With FERS, you can retire with a basic retirement benefit as soon as you reach your MRA and have just 10 years of service. In addition, FERS allows you to retire voluntarily with a reduced annuity at your MRA with at least 10 years, but less than 30 years of service. This is known as a MRA + 10 immediate retirement.

The MRA is the first year in which you can receive an annuity. It varies according to the year you were born. For anyone born before 1948, the MRA is age 55. It increases gradually to age 56 for those born between

1953 - 1964 and goes up to 57 for those born in 1970 and after.

The following chart will help you determine what your MRA is:

If you were born - Your MRA is age

Before 1948 - 55

In 1948 - 55 & 2 months

In 1949 - 55 and 4 months

In 1950 - 55 and 6 months

In 1951 - 55 and 8 months

In 1952 - 55 and 10 months

In 1953-1964 - 56

In 1965 - 56 and 2 months

In 1966 - 56 and 4 months

In 1967 - 56 and 6 months

In 1968 - 56 and 8 months

In 1969 - 56 and 10 months

In 1970 and After - 57

Under FERS, you can retire with a full annuity as soon as your age and years of Federal service match any of the following retirement combinations:

- At least your MRA with 30 years of service

- At least age 60 with 20 years of service or more

- At least age 62 with 5 years of civilian service or more

If You Leave Before Retirement Age...

If you do not want to wait until retirement age, you can withdraw all the money you have contributed toward the FERS Basic Benefit Plan. It will be paid to you with a market rate of interest; that is, the same rate of interest earned by the U.S. Treasury securities purchased by the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (the account that contains all employee and employer contributions to CSRS and FERS). However, you permanently give up your right to a basic retirement benefit based on that service. If you take your money out, you can-

not put it back in if you return to work with the Federal government later. It is usually better to leave your money in FERS so that you can receive a monthly annuity when you retire. This is because you pay very little compared to the benefits you will eventually receive from the basic retirement benefit.

Unfortunately, these options are only available to FERS and not Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees. For more information on FERS and CSRS retirements, please visit the ABC-C website at <https://www.abc.army.mil> or call us toll free at 1-877-276-9287 or 1-877-276-9833 (TDD).

(Editor's Note: If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this topic, please call the Civilian Personnel Activity Center (CPAC) at 827-4404 or 827-4333.)

VISTA International Operations Contributes a Helping Hand

By Dave Thomas, Contractor
VISTA Project Manager

Vista International Operations is honored to be apart of DOIM and assist them in their goals for the Depot. Currently, we assist DOIM by taking full charge of the following systems and areas: The Exchange Server and its interface, Outlook, the Blackberry Server and its hand-held devices, the Intranet, the Web Server, Help-Desk, and support in all Microsoft applications in regards to advisement of usage and configuration. This comprises VISTA's "Scope of Work".

The VISTA team includes Dave Thomas (Project Manager), Stan Gardner (Senior Systems Analyst), Bill Randolph (Systems Analyst/Web Developer) and Sean Theriault (Systems Analyst/Help Desk). Since our arrival at SIAD on October 15, 2003, we have made several improvements on the devices, resources, and servers that we are responsible for and that the employees use on a daily basis. The following is a highlight of those improvements:

Help Desk

The Help Desk has been streamlined to be the full interface for DOIM and its departments (ADP, COMMO, RADIO, & VISTA) and is now the only way to generate a Work Order or Trouble Ticket. This provides unity, clarification, and efficiency to the customers as it prevents efforts from being duplicated and requests from being lost. The Help Desk provides a 99% response rate with a live Technician that can fully analyze the customer's needs in order to provide the best response and service possible. We have the leverage of creating work orders, and then we pass the assignment of those work orders on to the DOIM. The process is seamless. You can always reach the Help Desk by calling HELP (4357) and your call will be answered in a courteous, timely, and professional manner.

Exchange (E-Mail) Server

The Exchange Services have recently been moved to a new state-of-the-art machine. This will significantly increase the reliability of service for E-Mail, especially since the new machine is coupled with a backup. This backup ensures that in the unlikely event our new sever experiences a loss in service, the other server can quickly replace it resulting in minimal downtime for E-Mail services.

Web Services – Internet and Intranet

The Website now showcases the new Sierra Army Depot look and has many additional links providing News, Lodging, Sierra Army Depot customers, SIAD's history, and our Army Family. Please take time to visit these sites at www.sierra.army.mil. The Intranet is only available on Depot at <https://Falcon.sierra.army.mil>.

VISTA is proud to be apart of the DOIM Team of Sierra Army Depot and looks forward to providing outstanding service in the years to come.



Photo By Lynn Goddard

Pictured from left to right are VISTA employees Bill Randolph, Dave Thomas, Sean Theriault and Stan Gardner. VISTA is providing outstanding service while assisting the employees within the Directorate of Information Management improve our automated processing systems.

SUMMER

Mormon Cricket Invasion on SIAD

On May 12, 2004, Ms. Patty Reed from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) contacted Sierra Army Depot (SIAD) Security stating that the crickets were heading our way in several bands that are approximately five miles wide. Capt. Kelly Frietas directed Ms. Reed to the Directorate of Public Works (DPW).

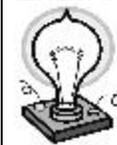
The DPW's goal was first to minimize the effect that large amounts of Mormon Crickets would have on depot operations, and second to assist Lassen County, the USDA, and the State of California in exterminating as many Mormon Crickets as possible at SIAD. The Crickets pose no health risks to humans but in large numbers could cause safety concerns.

Inspection of the depot revealed large bands of crickets at the southern border and all along the eastern boundary extending to the northern end of the depot. DPW applied twenty-three hundred lbs. of bait, with the assistance of USDA and the Lassen County AG Dept. The bait worked as follows, after the bait was consumed, it takes effect in a matter of minutes, shutting down the nervous system of the insect. Other crickets feed on the dead and dying crickets and in turn also die. An estimated three million crickets were killed at SIAD.

The cricket cycle is over for this year but each female cricket lays thirty to forty eggs, which will hatch next spring and the cycle will start again. One way to stop the cricket is for several hard freezing winters to reduce their populations as well as a coordinated plan to kill the crickets through aerial spraying. The USDA and the USF&WS would do aerial spraying with the approval and coordination of SIAD and Lassen County.

The DPW would like to thank Patty Reed and Bill Abel from the USDA, and Craig Hemphill from Lassen County AG Dept. for their advice and assistance. DPW would also like to thank all depot personnel who kept us informed on cricket locations. The point of contact at SIAD is Art Gomez.

ENERGY TIP OF THE MONTH



Evaporative Coolers



By Bob Gee

I can dazzle you with a bunch of energy efficiency stuff, but the bottom line, check your V-belt(s) for slippage when you replace the pads. Look at the belt Signs of cracking are the tattletale for slippage. For those who have a strobe light check the rpm of the pulley against the rpm of the belt. If you see more than 1% difference, replace the belt or try to move the motor out (be careful for motor alignment). Don't try using belt dressing, that spray-on stuff makes the belt slip even more. A 1% belt slippage will cost you about 20% of the motor kilowatt cost or in other words, about \$50 during the summer months (assuming 3hp and \$0.06 per kilowatt).

You're probably up on the roof anyway, do a good job of it.

(Editor's Note: This section is a new and will be a standing block within the Challenge. Mr. Bobb Gee, from Public Works will provide tips featuring energy saving initiatives. If you have any questions about the Energy Tip of the Month, please contact Mr. Bob Gee at extension 4679.

328th Combat Support Hospital Unit Enjoys Working at SIAD

By Captain Eric P. Hardison
S-4, 328 MRI CSH

Thirty Soldiers commanded by Captain Steven Ford and managed by Master Sergeant Sherry Nielsen from the 96th RRC assigned to the 328th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) based in Salt Lake City, Utah with troops also traveling from Fort Carson, Colorado, and Sacramento, California, recently spent 15 days at Sierra Army Depot (SIAD). Buildings 357 and 211 were utilized converting the 328th into a Medical Reengineering Initiative (MRI) CSH, accepting an initial fielding of Early Entry Hospital Element (EEHE) equipment sets, and inventorying their assigned Reserve Component Decrement (RCD) stocks which required detailed inventorying and hundreds of hours of medical maintenance support. The work was completed with the help of U.S. Army Medical Material Agency (USAMMA) personnel, Eagle systems contractors, Regional Training Site (Medical) employees, SIAD civilians and several bio-medical repair technicians from 801st CSH.

The 328th has been honored for service in many foreign campaigns such as the Philippines, and most recently having served as a unit in Desert Shield/Storm as a general hospital. Several Soldiers are currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 328th Soldiers were pleasantly surprised by being housed at building 169 which was noted for its very comfortable two man rooms, very large full kitchen, air conditioning, ample day room, large classroom, several office spaces, and internet access. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) section at SIAD was very accommodating: providing ample information about local activities along with 24-hour key access to the gymnasium. Although SIAD appeared remote, the leader's of the 328th found an assortment of safe and healthy activities for the care, morale and incentive of their troops within a half to one hour drive of SAID. The 328th Soldiers enjoyed trips to Lake Tahoe, a movie in Susanville and a 30+ mile bike ride along the Bizz Johnson trail.

More importantly, NCOIC's noted the personalized, genuinely positive, and rapid response to all of their requests. Commanders' noted SIAD as a place of much interest for future field training exercises due to the available space, climate and terrain features, and support of the local commander and civilians. Security was firm but friendly at all hours. "We have been treated as if we were the only ones in town. It has been the most personalized experience of my 19-year career..." says Captain Eric Hardison the 328th CSH S-4. The 328th anticipates returning to SIAD next year to complete the required 5-year RCD maintenance cycle.



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) Announcements - these are open to all U.S. citizens:

- General Support Helper, WG-3501-05, Temporary NTE 1 Year, Closes August 2, 2004

Merit Promotion Announcements - these are open to current permanent federal employees, Veteran's Recruitment Authority (VRA) eligibles, Reinstatement eligibles, Veteran's Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) eligibles, 30% Disabled Veterans and NAF Interchange eligibles:

For more information pertaining to on-going vacancy announcements, www.usajobs.opm.gov.

Open Continuous Merit Promotion Announcements - these announcements can be used to fill any of the grade levels on a term, a permanent or a temporary basis. All of these announcements close on 30 Sep 04.

- Security Guard, GS-0085-03/04/05
- General Engineer, GS-0801-11/12
- Supply Technician (Office Automation), GS-2005-05/06
- Materials Handler (Forklift Operator), WG-6907-04/05/06
- Motor Vehicle Operator, WG-5703-06/07
- Mechanical Equipment Repairer Helper, WG-5801-05
- Packer, WG-7002-04/05/06
- Forklift Operator (Motor Vehicle Operator), WG-5704-07
- Secretary (Office Automation), GS-0318-05/06
- Supply Technician, GS-2005-05/06/07
- Office Automation Clerk/Office Automation Assistant, GS-0326-04/05

If you have questions regarding these vacancies please give the Civilian Personnel Activity Center a call at 827-4255 or 827-4407.



SIERRA EMPLOYEES REACT TO SAVE OWLS

By Melani Tescher
Environmental Specialist

On June 15, 2004, the Environmental office received a call concerning the presence of a barn owl nest containing two owlets between stacked ISO containers. Due to paving, containers were being moved out of the area. The owlets were discovered when the top container was removed from a stacked set. The frightened owlets ran from their nest and onto an



adjacent set of containers. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the displacement of the owlets from their nest is prohibited and grouped with activities such as shooting, capturing, and trapping. The greatest fear associated with the displacement of a nest is abandonment and the death of the young. Barn owls, like all raptors, are ecologically important species to the health and wellbeing of the environment.

Better than traps, poison, or cats, the barn owl's ability to control rodents is legendary. Each young owl, as it



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nears maturity, will eat the equivalent of a dozen mice per night if such prey is available. Adult barn owls kill and consume the equivalent of one gopher per night. Research conducted by The Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation, Ontario, Canada report that barn owls consume twice as much food for their weight as other owls, which make them particularly attractive to farmers and ranchers.

Both prey base and suitable nesting sites limit the number of barn owls in an area. In the West, barn owls not only nest in natural trees cavities and buildings, they also nest in cavities in cliffs and cut banks, stacked hay bales, and in palm trees. Use of these sites



often leads to nesting failure such as when bales are shifted or in the case of Sierra containers.

Good News! Two baby barn owls (owlets) survived the displacement from their nest thanks to the Sierra Army Depot's employees whose caring and quick thinking saved the lives of these birds.

Will your family be prepared if disaster strikes?

By Veronica Morgan
Force Protection Specialist

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, created in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, urges all Americans to prepare for a disaster in advance and to use common sense.

While there is no way to predict what will happen, or what your personal circumstances will be, there are simple things you can do now to prepare yourself and your loved ones if disaster strikes.

Step 1: Make a kit of emergency supplies that will help your family get by for at least three days. That kit should cover basic needs for food, wa-

ter and clean air. You'll need one gallon of water per person per day for drinking and sanitation; non-perishable foods that your family would enjoy; and face masks or cloth to filter out debris or germs that could make you sick. Other recommended items include a battery-powered radio, flashlight and first aid kit.

Step 2: Make a plan for what you would do in an emergency and how family members would contact one another. If circumstances suggest, the safest bet is to "shelter in place," choose a room with as few windows and doors

as possible. Consider where you would go if you must evacuate. Talk to your children's schools and your employer about their emergency plans.

Step 3: Keep informed about what's happening. The type of terrorist threat may affect how you react.

In all cases, it's important to develop a family communication plan that lets family members know how to contact one another in case of an emergency. Make and distribute a list of everyone's contact information, including cell phone numbers, home and work numbers, and e-mail addresses. Tuck a card listing

those emergency contacts inside your child's knapsack.

Families also should designate a safe gathering place—either inside or away from the home—and practice their escape plan. But whether you actually evacuate your home or hunker down wherever you may be depends in large part of the nature of the emergency. It's important to listen to what emergency personnel are advising.

(Part credit to Reno Gazette-Journal, June 22, 2004, Karen Pallarito and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security website www.ready.gov)

"SIERRA" Takes First Place in Local Parade



Photo By Lynn Goddard

Colonel Paul Plemmons, Depot Commander, far left, and Ms. Lori McDonald, Public Affairs Officer, along with Ms. Sue Ritz, Contracting Officer (not pictured) endured the extreme hot heat and the fun, to show Sierra Army Depot's continued involvement as a member of Lassen County. The Lassen County Fair offers art cows for local businesses to decorate and enter into the county fair. Ms. McDonald and Ms. Sheri Underwood, Protocol Officer, decorated "SIERRA" so that she would represent not only the depot but the Army. Our wonderful mascot was well received from the bystanders along the 1.2 mile walk. After the parade the cow was on display during the fair for judging. "SIERRA" was such a hit that she took first place.

