

The Challenge

Sierra Army Depot, Herlong, Calif.

August 2009

Vol. 65 No. 8

Sierra demonstrates once again depot capabilities to senior leaders

By Lori McDonald
Public Affairs Officer

Sierra Army Depot had the distinct pleasure to host a critical visit by three members of the Army and AMC Senior Executive Service (SES) leadership on August 12 & 13.

Mr. James Dwyer, Deputy G3, Support Operations, Army Materiel Command, Mr. Michael Brown, G4 Office, Logistics, Department of the Army, and Mr. Gerald O'Keefe, Deputy G5, Strategy and Concepts, Army Materiel Command wanted to see first-hand the ability of Sierra employees to handle the upcoming

"surge" of excess material designated to come back from Iraq and Southwest Asia. The senior leadership of the Army and AMC are concerned that with the large amount of Non Standard Equipment (NSE) destined to return to CONUS, that we could become overwhelmed with the asset management tasks you are so familiar with after operating the AJ1 SWA Redistribution Pipeline for the past six years.

With those concerns in mind, Lt. Col. Joseph Dalessio, the Sierra Commander, was proud to highlight the depot workforce and our unique capabilities the receive and manage

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Mr. John Dingman, right, talks to Mr. Brown, left, Mr. Dwyer, and Mr. O'Keefe about the types of items received here at Sierra from SWA. Looking on are Lt. Col. Dalessio, Depot Commander, and Dr. Gray, Deputy to the Commander at Letterkenny Army Depot.

New GI Bill will heighten professional work force

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Carden, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (Aug. 27, 2009) -- More college-educated professionals will enter the next generation's professional work force as a result of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said this week at the American Legion's 91st National Convention in Louisville, Ky.

Shinseki lauded the organization's efforts in advocating the new legislation, just as it fought for the original GI Bill more than 65 years ago.

"Just as you were responsible for the passage of the original GI Bill in 1944, your commitment here was instrumental, yet again, in getting this 9/11 GI Bill through the Congress," Shinseki said.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill took effect Aug. 1, and with its expanded benefits and the option of transferring benefits to family members, it's likely to affect the country the way the original GI Bill did in 1944, he said.

Between 1944 and 1956, millions of veterans took advantage of educational benefits provided by the original bill and helped to fill the na-

tion's work force with qualified and trained professionals. Although they no longer wore the military uniform, the veterans' contributions to the country weren't any less significant, he said.

"Returning World War II veterans leveraged the educational opportunities they had under the original GI Bill into sustained economic growth for the nation, catapulting the nation into the world's largest economy [and into a position of] leadership in the free world," he said. "Our country became richer by 450,000 trained engineers, 240,000 accountants, 238,000 teachers, 91,000 scientists, 66,000 doctors, 22,000 dentists and [by] millions of other college-educated veterans who went on to lead our great country in the second half of the 20th century.

"This new Post-9/11 GI Bill has the potential to impact the country in the same way, thanks to your leadership and the leadership in country," he added. "You've been our eyes and ears for identifying needs for veterans."

The education opportunities also will help VA in its struggle to



end homelessness among veterans, which, Shinseki said, also will have an indirect but positive effect on a host of other issues. Veterans lead the nation in homelessness, he said, and also are ranked among the highest groups in the country for depression and substance abuse.

In 2003, more than 195,000 veterans were without homes. Shinseki pointed to a lack of education and employment opportunities, as well as mental-health and substance-abuse issues, as the main reasons for the over-representation of homeless

veterans.

Today, VA estimates that 131,000 veterans are homeless, and Shinseki said he's determined to get them off the streets within the next five years. His department and President Barack Obama's administration are moving in the right direction to tackle the issue, he said, but he noted it won't be easy.

"We're moving in the right direction to remove this block from all of our consciences, and are committed to ending homelessness," he said.

See BILL on Page 8

Commander's View

It is hard to believe that the month of August has come and gone--yet another busy month for the depot. SIAD's ability to meet and or exceed the established benchmarks for cost, schedule, and conformance are what truly set us apart from other organizations within AMC and TACOM LCMC enterprise. It is my intent through this medium to not only keep you apprised of the depot's core mission support and operations, but also to keep you informed of other noteworthy events that take place on the installation such as VIP/higher headquarter visits, audits/inspections, etc... (a holistic overview if you will). So let's take a look at what transpired this past month.

Operation Golden Cargo came to an official close with the redeployment of trail party the first week of August. The Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines performed



Lt. Col. Joseph G. Dalessio

magnificently transporting over 2,500 STONS of ammunition to the Hawthorne Army Depot without accident or incident. Due to their diligent and untiring efforts, remaining BRAC ammunition at SIAD is

scheduled to be packed and moved by subordinate elements under the Joint Munitions Command by April 2010 (five months ahead of schedule).

An IMCOM-West staff assistance visit took place as well early this month and paid tremendous dividends in assisting our Garrison Staff (S-1/DFMWR/Community Support Directorate) devise viable marketing solutions/strategies and sound business practices that will only enhance our future earnings potential for our lodging, gymnasium, bowling center, and child care/youth service facilities.

Congratulations are in order to our Risk Management Division and Directorate of Information Management as they both received laudatory comments from audit/inspection teams this past month. The Environmental Performance
See COMMANDER on Page 3

New Hires at SIAD

The following are new employees that have joined the team since last month:

- John Boneham**
- James Bronneke**
- Phyllis DeMartini**
- Christine Giese**
- Darlene Meno**
- Darrell Norman**
- Emeka Rouse**
- Shelly Sargent**
- Stephanie Scharf**
- Nicholas Vietti**



The Union's Position - AFGE Local 1808

Good day to my Brothers and Sisters of the local Union 1808. It is with great anticipation that I write to you all in regards to the many Union functions that took place during this month.

On Aug. 19 & 20, AFGE national representatives were on Depot. They helped Local 1808 put on a Union luncheon learn to recruit new members. They were placed in strategic locations throughout Sierra Army Depots employee break rooms.

At these specific locations they were on hand to answer any questions about AFGE national, and to sign up any new members. New members that signed up received a one time \$40.00 sign up bonus during this two day lunch-and-learn event.

The week after AFGE held their 38th annual national convention in Reno Nev.



Christopher Turek

What does National Convention mean for you the members of local 1808? During this week there was voting of national officers and most likely great debate about future strategies and possible request for an increase in Union dues that we pay to the National Organization of AFGE.

During the voting process, we as delegates receive a set amount of votes based on the amount of current

members we have in our bargaining unit, There is power in numbers. The amount of influence Sierra Army Depot has over policies and labor issues is dependent upon you as government workers banding together and standing with one voice.

For example there has been a recent bill put in place to change retirement benefits for federal employees.

The bill would update formulas for federal pensions to reflect private sector practices. This would effect all those who fall under CSRS retirement; your annual rate of pay would be calculated based on your highest five years instead of the current three year average.

The bill also includes taking away of collective bargaining units use of official time. It would also eliminate payments for federal workers who retire before the age of 62.

This is just one of the many issues that AFGE national and you as local bargaining members have to deal with. What can you do? Write your congressional delegates, and support your local union. If you would like to know more information about such issues you can find them by doing a search on the web at www.myfederalretirement.com.

Remember Union meetings are held every first Tuesday of the month at building 58 at 5:15 pm. If you have any questions regarding labor issues please contact me at x-5375.



The Challenge

Depot Commander/Publisher _____ Lt. Col. Joseph G. Dalessio
Public Affairs Officer/Editor _____ Lori K. McDonald
Photographer _____ Lloyd Gubler



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COMMANDER (From Page 2)

Assessment System audit took a close look at the depot's Air, Hazardous Materials, Hazardous Waste, Installation Restoration, and Water Quality/Drinking Water programs while the Enhanced Compliance Validation inspection vectored in on our information assurance readiness and compliance to DoD policies and requirements.

We closed out the month with VIP visits from AMC/DA G-4/TACOM and the Surface Deployment Distribution Command. The focus of each visit centered on viewing/assessing SIAD's capability to support the large amount of materiel projected to return from Iraq/Kuwait during the Responsible Drawdown effort. What an

incredible opportunity to show our higher headquarters and mission partners our first class operation and unmatched workforce. We hit it out of the ball park! Well done everyone.

Stay safe, take care of your buddy, and continue to enforce the established standards!



Palletized Loading System new safety process improvement designed, implemented during Golden Cargo exercise

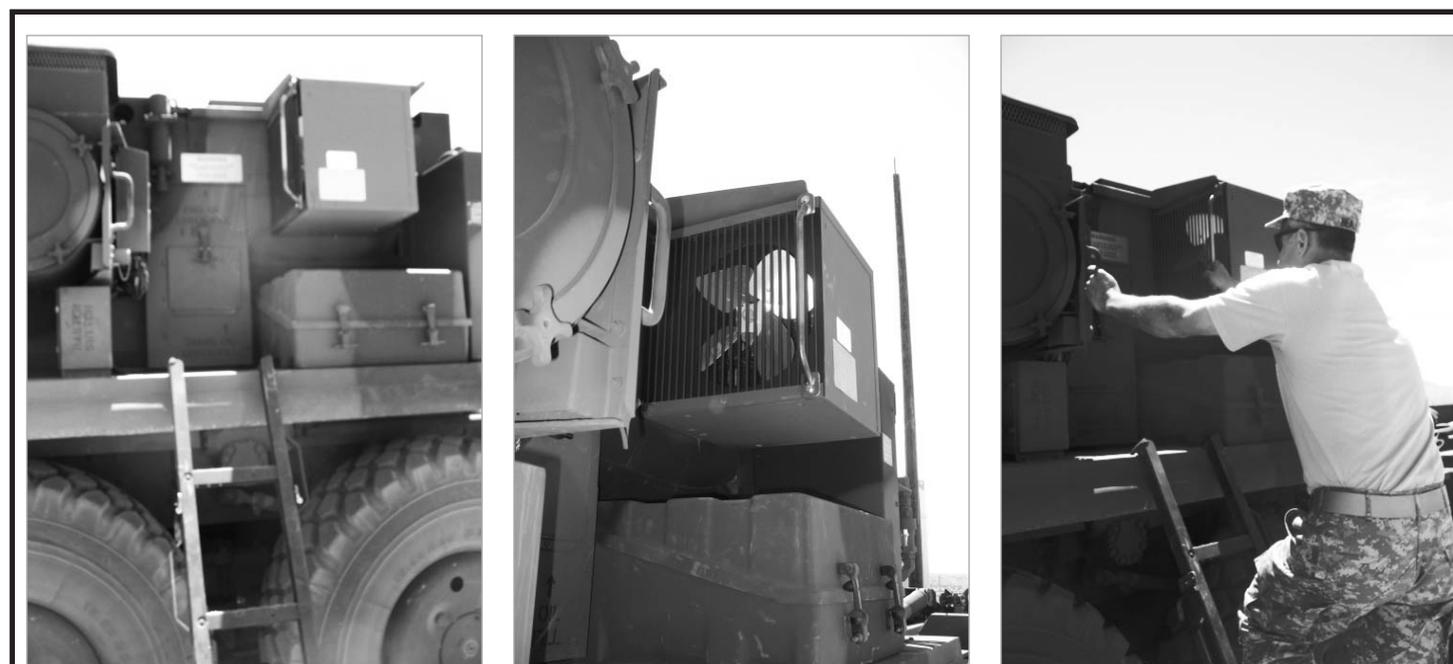
By Russell Collier
Safety Specialist

The Golden Cargo Team arrived at Sierra Army Depot to find themselves receiving OSHA VPP Safety Training before starting to work their mission. Reservists were informed that if you work on Sierra, you must share our VPP Safety Culture. Sierra employees are partners in Safety who take care of each other. We are the Interdependent Sierra Team that communicates and mitigates potential hazards before they hurt other employees. If you see a hazard, you own it! It doesn't matter if you're fighting in Afghanistan or moving material at Sierra, we must protect each other's back for Safety. We at Sierra help train each other with safe processes so everyone goes home unhurt at the end of the day.

Sierra Safety then followed up with Safety Process Spot Inspections at the 423rd Transportation Company out of Ft Carson, Colo. The Sierra Safety Team reviewed the Operational Process of the Army's Palletized Loading System (PLS) which consists of a system that picks up a CROP (skid) from the ground and transports them down range.

The next step was to brainstorm the hazards of the various PLS processes with the 423rd team. The basic operating process functions were dissected and the only real dicey challenge that offered a potential for injury, involved just getting up on to the PLS to conduct maintenance checks.

It was found that there was marginal hand holds for climbing up to



Members of the Depot Safety Team along with Soldiers from the 423rd Transportation Company modified ladders and handles for easier access onto a Palletized Loading System. Left photo shows the modified ladder and handle. Middle photo shows a close up of the climbing handle that has been attached to a cooling fan housing. A Soldier of the 423rd Transportation Company demonstrates the use of the newly modified ladder and handle for easy climbing access to the PLS.

check the engine oil, transmission fluid and coolant level. The 423rd and Sierra Teams brainstormed the risk, completed a Job Hazard Analysis and came up with a solution to the problem. It was concluded that the safest thing to do was to install another climbing handle on the cooling fan housing. This enabled maintenance personnel to maintain three point contact when climbing up on the PLS instead of two point contact. The handle was designed, fabricated and installed by Team Sierra. The material cost for the handle was less than \$10.00. Maintenance personnel can now safely climb up and conduct service checks on the front end of the power plant in the PLS with minimal risk.

The second hazardous process

on the PLS was climbing up on the rear service platform. The existing process involved stepping on the fuel system crossover valve with your right foot and putting your left shin or knees up on a metal step to climb up. The potential for your foot to slip off is great because the valve is narrow. This slipping could cause a person to bang their knee or shin and fall off backwards which may cause further injury. In addition, if your foot slipped forward off of the valve, you would kick the glass fuel bowl which could cause an environmental spill of up to 75 gallons of fuel. This could also disable the PLS.

The Teams conducted another JHA and came up with a simple ladder modification to the folding ladder that the PLS comes with. Two

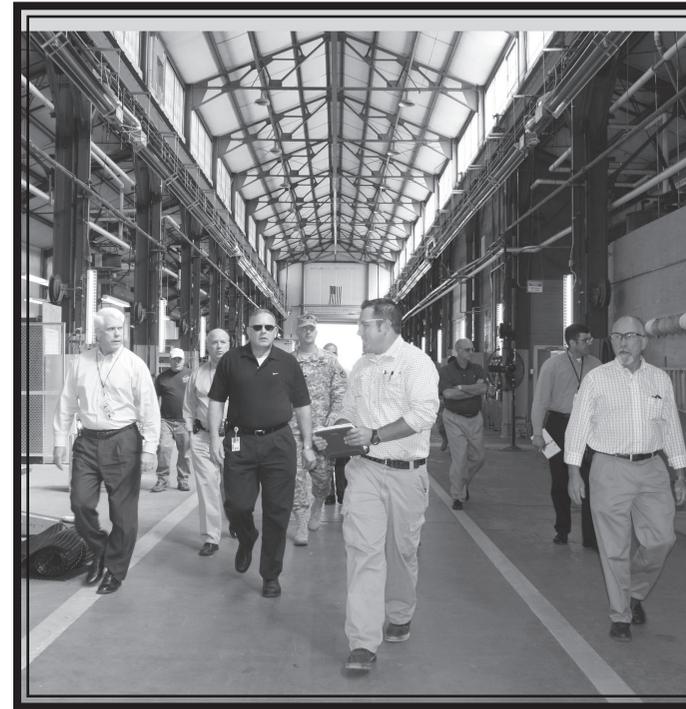
bolt on hooks were designed that attached under the existing welded on hooks. Two 5/8" holes were drilled into the step where troops put their knee while climbing up. The existing ladder could now be used to safely access rear area of the PLS power plant.

The ladder still folds up and fits into the holding rack originally designed for it on the passenger side of the PLS.

The material cost for the modification to the ladder was less than \$10.00. The savings recouped and pain from injuries.....priceless!

OSHA JHA's are a powerful tool for accident prevention. The more people involved in the brainstorming process, the better protection you get from hazards.

Sierra rolls out the carpet for SES members



SES (From Page 1)

the assets we envision coming out of SWA after fighting terrorists for the past 7 years.

The senior leaders received the traditional command briefing along with a short video clip showing our core capabilities before going out into the warm afternoon to begin the depot tour. The Long Term Storage area was the first stop where they learned about the reclamation, inventory, and parts pulling on the combat and mechanized vehicles that are currently being stored here. Also during this portion, Mr. Donald Olson, Deputy Commander, explained how the depot has the capacity to handle the surge requirements associated with these items that are scheduled to return.

The next stop, the major focus area of the tour, was at the SWA Excess Equipment Redistribution area (AJ1 Directorate). Both Dwyer and Brown looked inside a container that was recently received on depot from SWA and noticed broken boxes and miscellaneous hardware. Mr. John Dingman, AJ1 Director, explained that the depot frequently receives material from SWA that is not in perfect condition, is not properly identified on the shipping documents, and we may not know exactly what is in some of the containers until they are opened.

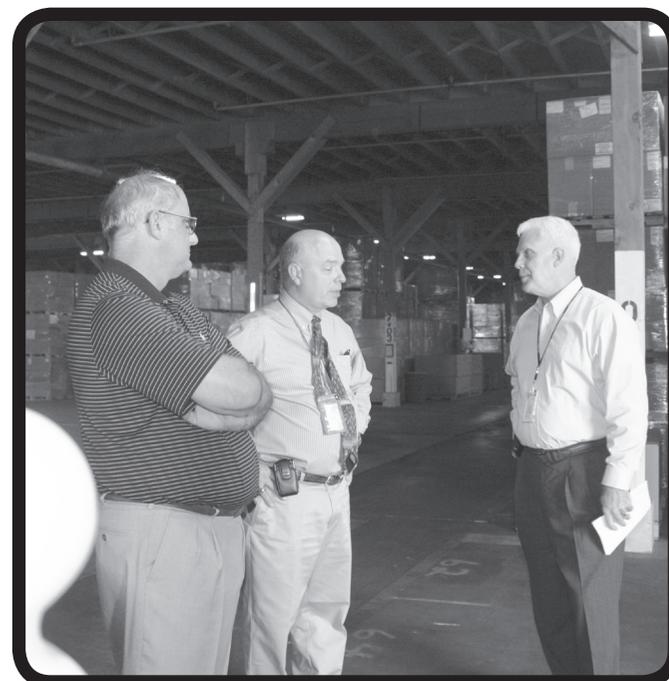
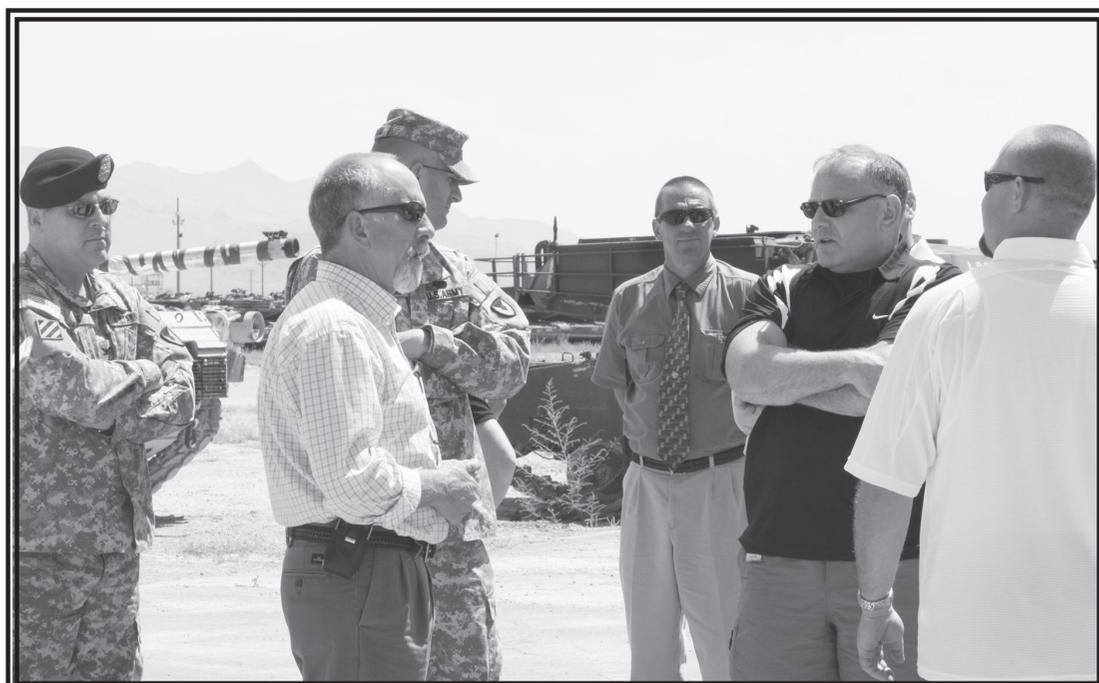
Dingman walked with the group along the production lines of the equipment reclamation and redistribution area where they were

able to observe how items are received, inventoried, condition coded and brought to record. The group then proceeded over to where the Organizational Clothing and Individual Equipment items were being worked. He was impressed with the sheer amount of material we were reclaiming for the nation's war fighters – and our clearly-identified processes for reclaiming the material so it could be used again in support of our Soldiers.

Other areas toured were Water and Fuel Assembly, Trailer Reset, Welding Shop, and the new Paint Booth currently being constructed. Upon completion of the tour, Dwyer turned to Dalessio and asked what did the depot need to be better

prepared for the surge of containers coming his way, once the drawdown of Southwest Asia begins. Dalessio provided Dwyer with the necessary information needed to be ready for this tasking.

The SES is comprised of the men and women charged with leading the continuing transformation of our government. This dedicated corps of executives shares a commitment to public service and a set of democratic values grounded in the fundamental ideals of the Constitution. As the leaders of our Federal civilian workforce, Senior Executives strive each day to create a more citizen centered, result oriented Federal Government.



CYS Monthly Update

Missoula Children's Theater Group Coming Back to Herlong

In September 2009, for the second year in a row, CYS Services is sponsoring the Missoula Children's Theater Group to come to Herlong to put on a production.

The Missoula tour teams travel around to different cities and countries to bring the art of drama to children. There will be parts for all age groups, from Kindergarten to 12th grade.

Tryouts, practice, and the production will be held during the week of 14 through 19 September during and after school, with support from

the Ft. Sage School District and Long Valley Charter School. The play that will be presented by the children this year will be RUMPELSTILTSKIN, an original adaptation of the classic children's story. We encourage all our members to tryout.

Photography Contest

CYSS is proud to announce that one of our members (Seanna Miller, Age 13) received a Regional Honorable Mention for her photograph that was entered in the Image Makers National Photography Contest.

If you have any questions on any of the events listed above please contact CYS Services at 827-4696.

Your Training Team on Sierra

By Mary Deming,
Training Instructor

What do you get when you have an ex-school principal, an American Forces Network radio host, and an Office Automation Assistant who has done a little bit of everything, including a deployment to Iraq? It sounds like the list of contestants in the latest reality TV show but it's not. These folks make up the training team here on Sierra Army Depot. They are responsible for the New Employee Orientation course, Customer Service training, Leadership Academy, and sponsorship to name just a few of their functions. Since it's a relatively new group, we thought we'd introduce ourselves to the Depot.

Rick Martinez, Training Specialist, is the head of our group. With 28 years of service between the Army and the Army National Guard, Martinez is no stranger to serving the Warfighter. He is still a member of the Guard and was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His civilian background includes 22 years in public school education. He spent 12 of those years as a science teacher in Round Valley, Calif., and ten years as a principal at various schools in Northern California. Martinez and his wife of 33 years, Delia, have three kids, the youngest of whom is 23. Rounding out the family are a four pound Chihuahua named Cha Cha, a seven pound fox terrier named Gary Owen, Top Sergeant, a 120 pound Rottie, Cramer

the parakeet, and Babbs the cat.

Mary Deming, Training Instructor, has close to 20 years serving the Army as a civilian. It started when she left Reno, Nev., for Frankfurt, Germany with the Army Recreation Machine Program (ARMP). Later, she was a graphic designer for the Army's Interior Design Office in Alexandria, Va., where she created the logos for the Army's in-house food franchises and the Army's World Class Athlete Program. Then it was back to Germany, this time to Wuerzburg, where she was an on-air personality on American Forces Network Radio (AFN). She produced over 500 radio spots, and won the Thomas Jefferson Award, the top broadcasting award worldwide for the Department of Defense. Back in Virginia, she became the Visitor Services Coordinator for the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum annex at Dulles Airport where she was in charge of over 160 volunteers. Mary's husband Bill also works at the Depot and after all their globe-trotting, they are happy to be settled back home in Reno.

Suzann Sweidan, Office Automation Assistant, has worn many hats before coming to Sierra. Prior to becoming a government employee she had worked as a manager at McDonalds, at Walt Disney World as a multi-functional cast member, for Continental ExpressJet Airlines as a cross-trained airport sales agent, and for L-3 Vertex Communications Contracting on the Corpus Christi Army Depot. Sweidan has also been

FOR SALE



1997 Ford F-150 4X4, Lariat Edition, Fully Loaded Leather interior, XM satellite radio, a/t, c/c, a/c, p/w, p/l keyless entry, tilt wheel, rear sliding window, power seats power

mirrors, toneau cover, nerf bars, oversize off road wheels and tires, cold air intake, CA legal headers, tow package, alloy wheels. 176k miles. everything works great recent tune up, \$4900 obo. contact 530-260-1468

1941 CLASSIC FORD PICK UP TRUCK (BLUE in Color)



-350 Chevy engine, Aluminum Edelbrock heads, Turbo 350 transmission, new Lokar shifter, new Flaming River polished stainless steel tilt column, new wiring, power electric leather bucket seats, new 9.5" x 17" torque thrust rims with

275/50/17 tires on the rear and 14" x 6" torque thrust rims in front, new rear TCI leaf springs and shocks, Flow Master mufflers, S.W. gauges, truck is all metal except running boards and rear fenders (have original metal rear fenders in pretty good shape, original running boards in great condition for their age and one front fender that goes with the truck), all glass is great, doors are excellent, small rust spot in front of floor (floor in good condition except where someone cut out for brake cylinder & battery - have new floor pan needs welding in), original front end with disc brakes, drives great and stops great. \$13,500 OBO Willing to negotiate with serious buyer.

Call (530) 251-2334 if interested. Please leave message if no answer.

overseas and worked in Baghdad, Iraq as a Facilities Work Orders Coordinator. She's been at Sierra since November 2007 where she started out in AJ1 as a Supply Technician. For someone who is only 21 years old, she's seen a lot and done a lot

and we are happy to have her as part of the Sierra Training Team.

Be sure to check out upcoming issues of *The Challenge* where we'll talk about the future of training here on the Depot and what it can mean to you.

Grandparent's
Day

September 13

Commander shares what to expect, what is expected

Command Philosophy:

The most important and sacred responsibility entrusted to any soldier is the privilege of leading. Although I feel challenged in getting up to speed on what I need to learn about this organization, its mission, and its people, I truly consider myself extremely fortunate to be given such an incredible opportunity. I sincerely hope that you will share with me your experiences, input and counsel.

What you can expect from me--know that I am a good listener, care deeply about people, and believe that my job is to facilitate your success. As the newest member to the Sierra Army Depot (SIAD) Team, I would like to share with you a few simple principles / fundamental practices that I have come to embrace and follow over the years.

Easily understood and infectious, I believe that they are true catalysts for success:

a. High standards lead to professionalism and professionalism should always be the hallmark of SIAD.

b. Safety is everyone's business (risk assessment and risk mitigation must become a daily habit).

c. Take care of your people and their families (be there when needed, not when it is convenient).

d. Treat EVERYONE with dignity and the utmost respect.

e. Take every opportunity to mentor, coach, assess, and counsel.

f. Recognize your people their outstanding contributions and hard work.

g. Effective two-way communication is essential to any organizations' success.

h. The old axiom, "lead by example", will always serve you well (leaders / supervisors are on parade 24 hours a day).

i. Manage the present and anticipate the future.

j. Do not be ambiguous and indecisive.

k. Be friendly, firm, fair and visible.

l. Know yourself (i.e., your capabilities and limitations).

m. Think "outside-of-the-box" (Initiative is a good thing. The secret of getting ahead is getting started).

n. Be a Team Player (self-sacri-

fice before self-indulgence).

o. Take pride and ownership in what you do (be totally committed, give every task your best effort and you'll never be disappointed in the outcome).

p. Always choose to do what's right, not what's easy (short cuts will only come back to haunt you).

q. Own your turf (know your business).

r. There is no margin of error for waste (limited resources and a zero growth defense budgets are constraints we have to live with. SIAD must continue to be more efficient, effective, and competitive by enforcing fiscal responsibility, implementing Activity Base Costing, optimizing infrastructure, streamlining organizations, and improving operations and processes).

s. Always maintain a sense of humor and have fun (work hard and play hard)!

The Big Five (my focus areas, there is no set priority--all are of equal importance):

a. Workforce/Families. Our depots "center of gravity", everything starts here.

b. Safety. We have a solid and unmatched program in place--let's continue to build it (through ISO 18001 certification, VPP safety journey etc...) and moreover enforce the standards/procedures we have established.

c. Mission. We all successfully contribute to the depot's operational mission. A few areas of concentration include: total production, schedule/quality conformance, financial metrics/measurables (i.e., NOR, DLH, Productive Yield etc...), LMP transition, lean initiatives etc...

d. Communications. Ensure the task is understood, supervised and accomplished. Never let communication be the single "point of failure".

e. SIAD's future. Let's continue to get the word out--the depot has a lot to offer to the DOD, our commercial business partners, and our surrounding communities. Developing fair solutions that produce best value service is our benchmark! We will continue to aggressively refine our organization's strategic action plan.

LEAN into my CORNER

By William Deming
QEO Chief



This month, I'm going to take a closer look at a single type of Lean event, the Value Stream Analysis (VSA). As I write this, a team comprising members from several directorates has just wrapped up a VSA dealing with aspects of the container management process. While we often talk about value in a Lean context, it often becomes just another word. Let's see if we can flesh it out a bit.

What exactly do we mean by value? It can mean a lot of different things, depending on your audience, your topic, or a host of other considerations. When Lean is the topic however, value has only one meaning: "Value is whatever the customer is willing to pay for." This sounds like a very broad definition on its face but in reality, it's very restrictive. When we agree to produce a product or perform a service, we are provided with a specific set of requirements by the customer. If a step in our process helps us to meet those requirements, that step adds value to the process.

This is not to say that we can remove all the non-value added steps in a process. There are a lot of things we do that the customer did not ask for but we have to do them anyway. For example, accounting, security, quality assurance inspections, Lean facilitation services, and many other activities don't directly add value to our products (from the customer's perspective). Our customers expect us to deliver a quality product to the specifications provided. Everything else is superfluous. Nevertheless, we will continue to perform many activities because they are required by law or regulation. In some cases, they may not even be regulatory requirements but good business practice

requires us to do them. All our programs would fail if we didn't track the revenues and expenses associated with them.

Another type of non-value added process step represents true waste. We often perform these non-value added steps out of habit. For example, we typically spend a lot of time rummaging through a toolbox to find the correct tool for a particular operation. If we were to organize the workplace (perhaps by conducting a 6S Lean event), we could shadow-box our tools and eliminate that waste. Again, the customer is paying us to turn the wrench, not to look for it.

Getting back to the VSA, the point of this type of Lean event is to examine a process, break it down into its component steps, and determine which steps add value (as always, from the customer's point of view) and which ones represent waste. We generally spend three days doing this rather than the four days we usually take for other types of events. Unlike a 6S, a 3P, or a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE), we usually don't expect to realize any savings directly from a VSA. Instead, we use it to identify opportunities for improving our processes. We can then use Lean techniques to remove waste and reduce costs. In the end, the customer benefits because we are able to produce the same output while reducing cost and/or improving quality.



Afghan War 'Fundamental' to U.S. Defense, Obama Says

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17, 2009 – Terrorists who attacked the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, are plotting to do so again, so defeating them is "fundamental to the defense of our people," President Barack Obama told veterans at the annual Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Phoenix today.

Obama said the U.S. military will be better able to refocus on the war against al-Qaida and its extremist allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan as it moves toward completing the mission in Iraq.

The president cited signs of the new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy introduced in March in action. U.S. troops have gone into new areas to take the fight to the Taliban. They've adopted new tactics that include protecting the Afghan people and improving their lives.

Today, he noted, they're helping secure polling places for the Aug. 20 elections.

These efforts have come at a high cost, he told the veterans, with fierce fighting and heavier U.S. casualties.

"As I said when I announced this strategy, there will be more difficult days ahead," he said. "The insurgency in Afghanistan didn't just happen overnight. And we won't defeat it overnight. This will not be quick. This will not be easy.

"But we must never forget: This is not a war of choice," the president continued. "This is a war of neces-

sity. Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again."

If left unchecked, extremists will secure an even larger safe haven for al-Qaida to plot to kill more Americans, Obama said. "So this is not only a war worth fighting. This is fundamental to the defense of our people."

Meanwhile, Obama cited progress made in Iraq. He called the transfer of security control in the cities and town to Iraq's own security services June 30 a critical step toward completing the U.S. mission there.

"As they take control of their destiny, Iraqis will be tested and targeted," he said. "Those who seek to sow sectarian division will attempt more senseless bombings, more killings of innocents. This we know."

But the president reiterated that the United States will live up to its commitment to Iraq, removing all combat brigades by August 2010, and all U.S. troops by December 2011.

"For America, the Iraq war will end," he told the veterans.

Obama pledged to ensure troops who wage the wars have everything they need to succeed in these operations, and that policies reward them and their families for their sacrifices.

"To all those who have served America -- our forces, your families, our veterans -- you have done your duty," Obama told the veterans. "You have fulfilled your responsibilities, and now a grateful nation must fulfill ours."

Depot employees participate in Relay for Life event

Employees once again came together for a good cause - "The Fight Against Cancer".

On Aug. 1, the annual Relay for Life event was held in Susanville, Calif., to help raise money and awareness in the fight against all types of cancer. Sierra Army Depot's team, "ARMY STRONG Against Cancer", raised a total of \$5,214.42.

The event, which is the signa-

ture event for the American Cancer Society, is normally a 24-hour event that signifies the fight to find a cure for cancer is always working. Unfortunately, this year, the event was closed down early due to lightning.

Again, thank you to everyone whom contributed, worked and walked during this important event. We look forward to your participation in next year's event.

Safety Center promotes National Preparedness Month

By USACRSC Public Affairs

FORT RUCKER, Ala. (Aug. 31, 2009) - In September, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center joins forces with the Ready Army team to observe National Preparedness Month and encourage every member of the Army family to commit themselves to a constant state of readiness.

"Things like permanent changes of station, deployments and natural disasters force every Soldier, Civilian and Family member to be ready for anything at anytime," said Col. Scott Thompson, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center deputy commander. "I encourage every member of our Army family to take time during this national observance to ask yourself if you are truly ready for anything."

National Preparedness Month is a 6-year-old observance that is held each September and focuses on encouraging citizens to make preparedness a top priority in their lives.

This year, National Preparedness Month organizers are asking Americans to look beyond a working fire alarm or extra food in the pantry to better understand what it truly means to be ready for anything.

"An Army family that is properly prepared for anything enhances the readiness of our force," Thompson said. "The right plan, the right kit and the right information all combine to increase the resilience of our Band of Brothers and Sisters in the face of whatever challenges we might encounter."

Driven by the mantra "get a kit, make a plan, be informed, get involved," National Preparedness Month organizers have assembled a wealth of tools and tips to help people assemble emergency kits and be informed of threats unique to their areas. These tools and tips, which feature lists of what to include in emergency kits and how to assemble a family emergency plan, can be found at www.ready.gov or www.ready.army.mil.

"Take time to prepare now," Thompson said. "There are so many uncertainties in our lives today, don't let your safety or your preparedness be counted among them."

For more information about preparing for and mitigating the risk of a variety of on and off duty activities, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

The Ready Army program urges families to be prepared for severe weather, especially during National Preparedness Month in September.

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"No one that has served the nation as we have should live without care and without hope. I know there are no absolutes in life, ... but I also know that if we don't put a big target out there, we won't get our best efforts."

Homelessness is the last stop in an unfortunate road for many veterans, the secretary said. "To do this well, we'll have to attack the entire downward spiral that ends in homelessness," he said. "We must offer education, we must offer jobs, we must treat depression and we must treat substance abuse, [and] we must offer safe housing [for homeless veterans]. We must

do it all."

The Post-9/11 GI Bill may not deliver an immediate impact on the homeless issue and others that veterans may face, but education is a long-term investment that will ensure many of their futures, he said.

"This investment in America's future will go on for decades to come," he said. "I told you what happened the first time we did this: thousands of trained engineers, scientists, doctors, dentists, accountants [and] teachers. Lightning is about to strike twice. And those who've answered our nation's call are going to be benefited into being leaders for our country in the 21st century through this program."