

# Family Assistance Center open, ready to help

**SGT. NIKKI AGEE**  
5035th GSU

Dealing with deployment can be tough for soldiers and their families, but the Family Assistance Center is there to help. The center provides family assistance and support services and is the official information and referral source for families. It also provides crisis services and coordinates with rear detachments.

"The Family Assistance Center is a consolidated center of all the services a family member might need to make getting help more convenient," said Nancy Piper, director of the Community Services Center, Building 2494, where the FAC is located. "We have all the same programs that ACS offers but there are a few more. FAC brings in other components—the Red Cross, chaplains, Tricare, lawyers. We don't have ID cards and DEERS yet, but we will," she said.

"It's important is to facilitate ease in dealing with any of the stresses associated with deployment. People need powers of attorney. There are stresses associated with being a single parent. It's important for people to know they are supported. Our goal is to give them the tools they need to function well," Piper said.

Some of those tools include classes on coping with deployment — relationship building, stress management, single parenting and preparing for reunion.

The center also offers financial assistance like certified credit counseling, employment assistance, resolving consumer issues and food stamps.

It also provides crisis and grief counseling, emergency respite care and pastoral services. The center is also prepared to deal with crisis on a large-scale, Piper said.

"We're prepared to take phone calls en masse if anything were to happen anywhere. We're prepared to take on whatever comes. The community really needs to know that the center is prepared to deal with crisis,"

she said. "We've practiced this, rehearsed and trained for it for years, and I think the Army as an organization and us as an installation are very well prepared," Piper said. "We learned a lot during Desert Storm and were able to identify what the needs of families are," she said.

To help meet those needs, the facility has a built-in ballroom, used recently by deploying soldiers and their families as a farewell point.

"We're really glad to have the farewells going on in the ballroom because it gives us an opportunity to talk to the families," she said. "It's

that contact with the family member that's so important—making sure families have that link with the rear detachment and us," she said.

In addition, the building has offices for victim/counseling services, Army Emergency Relief, family readiness groups, the Red Cross, a media center and has a lending closet for soldiers who are relocating and need to borrow household items.

The center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and can be contacted at 568-1132, 568-4614, or toll free at 1-866-562-8158.



SGT. TRINACE JOHNSON

## Kissing the baby goodbye

Sgt. Robert Bull, 745th Forward Surgical Team EMT, kisses his baby son Andrew once more, prior to deploying last week. The 745th FST was given a farewell luncheon along with their family members.

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