

Robust support for military families on-going

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Special to The Monitor

WASHINGTON – Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Michael L. Dominguez stated at a meeting Jan. 11 with military and community support organizations, “As additional forces deploy in support of the new strategies in Iraq, programs and policies at home will immediately respond to the needs of families. These families will need grassroots support as many are National Guard and Reserve and are distributed across many states rather than on or near military installations.”

Dominguez made these comments

as twenty-two of America’s most prestigious military and community support organizations were here to discuss how to help military families impacted by the President’s new strategy for the war in Iraq.

“We all know the important role military families play in national security,” Dominguez told key leaders. “You (the support organizations) deliver services so essential and capture information about what needs to be done, I asked you to attend today to hear your ideas.”

The Department of Defense has a strong bond with all of these grassroots organizations nationwide. A separate section of the Military

OneSource Web-site now includes a page where community and military support organizations can post sponsored events to help connect families in their communities.

“Military families also serve. They have a patriotic and noble spirit,” Dominguez said, “but their sacrifices are greater than ever with change in deployments. We appreciate your steadfast support.”

Key activities under way in the Department of Defense to support military units impacted by the policy change will address families’ needs, Dominguez said. Initial efforts will specifically target the needs of the units in the Minnesota National

Guard, the first heavily impacted state.

A team of military family assistance counselors, requested by Minnesota’s adjutant general, will provide on-going support to families in the months to come, Dominguez said. They will help coordinate local resources, identify needed services, conduct face-to-face counseling, teach classes and help families and children develop coping strategies.

These programs are based on recent experiences with similar changes in rotations. Other family issues will address financial stability and emotional challenges. Particular attention will be paid to respite child-care and children’s emotional well-being.

Similar plans to support service-members and families of other affected units are under way by each of the military services; they are aggressively engaged. The Defense Department’s robust Military OneSource central location for assistance is available 24-hours-a-day, seven days-a-week. The Web site <http://www.militaryonesource.com> and toll-free telephone number at 1-800-342-9647 provide immediate access to a consultant for help with problem solving – no issue is too small.


“If ever there was a time to show that we care for our troops, it’s now,” one attendee said.



LUKE ELLIOT

‘Johnny 5’ look-a-like shows up

Discovery Channel’s Future Weapons host Richard “Mack” Machowicz controls the iRobot, an Unmanned Ground Vehicle that is part of the Army’s Future Combat Systems modernization program, at Oro Grande Range, N.M. Future Weapons filmed a show highlighting the Army’s FCS program at Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range, N.M. The show is expected to air on the Discovery Channel this spring.



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