



DMAVA

HIGHLIGHTS



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Making Friends



Command Sgt. Maj. Hermenegildo Devarie, 117th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion command sergeant major, poses with two new friends in Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)

Vote now for your choice of best Army PT uniform

By C. Todd Lopez, Army News Service

Back in February, the Army gave Soldiers a chance to weigh in on the Improved Physical Fitness Uniform. The Army took those Soldier suggestions and developed a possible replacement uniform.

Beginning Oct. 9, Soldiers can vote on which one of those they think looks the best. The online poll will be available for 20 days.

More than 76,000 Soldiers responded to the initial survey. Among other things, Soldiers commented about uniform fit, moisture wicking and anti-microbial properties and how much the uniform weighs. The Army listened to Soldiers and has developed a new Improved Physical Fitness Uniform, or IPFU.

Now the Army wants Soldiers to weigh in on color options and graphic patterns for the uniform. There are six candidate uniforms – they are all the same in terms of fabrics, capabilities and durability. What’s different is the color of the fabrics and the size, color and shapes of the graphic designs.

Stylistic variations include different colors for the jacket and pants -- black or gray, for instance. Soldiers can also choose among graphic elements and colors for graphic elements.

With the jacket, for instance, there is a chevron emblazoned across the chest. That can be in yellow, grey or black, and it can be thick or thin. On the shorts, there’s the option to have colored piping on the sides. For the long and short-sleeve T-shirts, there are both fabric color options and the option to have either the word “Army” emblazoned across the chest or the Army logo over the left breast.

Perhaps more important than how the uniform looks is how the uniform will perform and feel. Improvements in the IPFU include reduced fabric weight, tag-less labels, anti-microbial properties, quick-dry capability, removal of reflective properties in the uniform, the removal of the liner and elastic bottom on the pants, and overall pattern adjustments to provide a better fit.

Those changes came as a result of Soldier input as well. Command Sgt. Maj. Emmett Maunakea, Program Executive Office Soldier, said Soldiers were asked to weigh in on the IPFU, and are being asked now to vote on which uniform they like best, because it is Soldiers who are the end users.

“Nobody can tell you better what needs to happen with it than the user of that piece of equipment,” Maunakea said. “We need the feedback from Soldiers and leaders in the field to tell us what is wrong with it, what is right with it, and how can we make it better and work better for them.”

Maunakea said Soldiers know what’s available to civilians in the way of fitness gear, and brought that knowledge with them when they commented on the Army’s uniform.

“Our Soldiers are smart,” he said. “They are out there spending a lot of money in the economy as they buy their civilian workout clothing. And they are buying the newest, latest and greatest type of stuff.”

Maj. Mia Bruner, assistant product manager for initial issue uniforms, said Soldiers came into the February survey with well-informed ideas about their physical fitness uniform.

“They knew what they wanted that uniform to do,” she said. “They knew that they wanted it to have sort of high-performance capabilities within the fabric. They know when you go out on the commercial market, you see tags that say anti-microbial and quick-dry and all of these high-speed, high-performance terminology -- they knew what characteristics and features they wanted to see in the uniform.”

To save on cost, the reflective elements of the IPFU have been removed, Maunakea said.

“Everybody is going to be wearing a PT belt anyway, so it doesn’t make sense to have it on the uniform, if you are already wearing a reflective belt.”

On the long sleeve T-shirt, the “mock collar” has been removed, as well as the sleeve cuffs, to make the uniform more comfortable for Soldiers.

“We made it more like a crew neck collar to allow more air in for the Soldiers to cool down as they are working out,” Bruner said. “It won’t be as constricted around the neck area.”

In the February survey, Soldiers had said they felt the liner in the pants was too thick and “got in the way,” Bruner said. The liner has been removed. “We included re-enforcements along the knee area as well.”

Also a possibility with the new uniform is “possible female sizing that will be developed,” Bruner said.

Maunakea and a team from PEO Soldier will travel around the Army to show off to Soldiers the new uniform options. The dates and locations include Fort Bragg, N.C., Oct. 8-10 ; Fort Hood, Texas, Oct. 11-15; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Oct. 16-18; and Fort Shafter and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, Oct. 19-26. Locations for those demonstrations were chosen for density of Soldiers.

After Soldiers vote on which uniform they like best, there will be a “series of steps” that must take place before the uniforms reach Soldiers. Included in those steps are wear testing by a sample group of Soldiers, additional improvements as a result of that testing, and a final approval by the chief of staff of the Army.

Soldiers can start voting on the IPFU beginning Oct. 9. To vote, go to <https://ipfusurvey.natick.army.mil>, and log in with your CAC. If you want to take the survey without having to log in with your CAC, visit <https://surveys.natick.army.mil/Surveys/ipfu.nsf>.



The "VOW to Hire Heroes" Veterans Job Fair

Sponsored by:

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Thursday, November 1, 2012

The Paul Robeson Campus Center
Rutgers-Newark: 350 Martin Luther King Blvd., Newark, NJ 07102

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Featuring

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10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Join us October 24, 2012, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM for a job fair for veteran job seekers, active duty military, members of the National Guard and reserve components, and military spouses at the National Guard Armory on Route 12 in Hunterdon County, Flemington, NJ. This event will be FREE for both employers and job seekers.

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This ESGR-sponsored hiring event is being conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and local Chambers of Commerce; New Jersey Committee, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR); the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS); the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; NBC News, and other local partners; we welcome the participation of the office of Assemblywoman Donna Simon.

For registration questions, please contact us at hiringourheroes@uschamber.com or call 202-463-5807.



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Saturday, November 10th

MILITARY PERSONNEL/VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY

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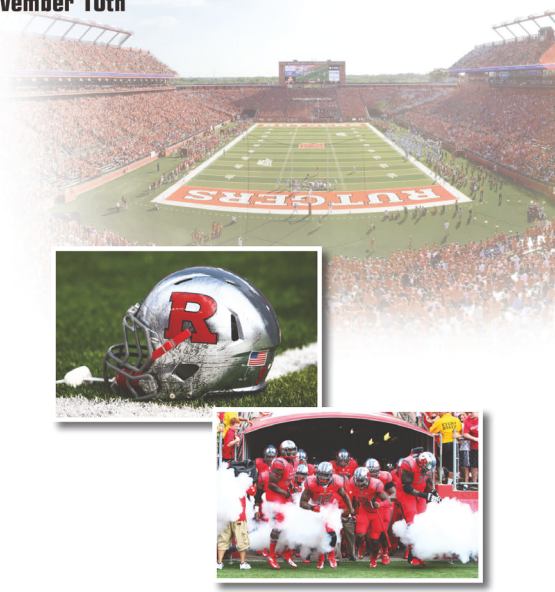
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108th Wing Airman gains motivation from family, tradition, Airman's Creed

By Donna Clementoni, director of employer outreach for NJ ESGR

In retrospect, it will be fierce determination that advances Courtney Beard's career to an enviable status.

At 23-years old, she already has her staff sergeant stripes on her arm and a stunning list of achievements. New Jersey Air National Guard State Command Chief Vincent Morton confirms, "she is going places."

The first stop will be Long Beach, Calif., when she attends the Enlisted Association of the Nation Guard United States (EANGUS) Conference. She is the NJANG, 2011 Airman of the Year and will represent the state at the convention while a national winner is announced.

But the accolades continue – Beard was also named the 2011 U.S. Air Force Intelligence Surveillance & Reconnaissance (ISR) Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year.

Her Airmen comrades from the 108th Wing claim her to be the "Airman of the Century" and an older unit member jokes that she "wants to be like Beard" when she grows up.

Now a staff sergeant, Beard greatly appreciates the recognition for her achievements, but she has already set her focus on the next challenges.

Though she is perfectly coiffed in her dress uniform, she is not afraid to get 'down and dirty.'" From a deep level and stemming from a family tradition, Beard is a warrior.

Her family can trace their military involvement back to the Revolutionary War. Her grandfather, Harold Allen Beard Sr., was a Marine. Her parents, both in the U.S. Air Force at the time, met at Lakenheath Royal Air Force Base in England, where Beard was born. Her brother, Harold Allen Beard III, recently enlisted in the Army and her youngest sibling, Jacob, is sure to respond to the call of duty.

But behind every success there is usually an equivalent sacrifice. For Beard, it was her mother, Heather, that made the decision to not stay in the Air Force when



Senior Airman Courtney Beard, 108th Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, poses for a photo with her spurs and III Corps belt buckle, which she earned by completing the 18-hour Spur Ride, a series of mental and physical tests, held by the U.S. Army's III Corps, Task Force Phantom. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Longoria/Released)

she discovered she was pregnant with her daughter. Motherhood became a priority that she wholeheartedly embraced. She took pride in her decision to 'invest in her children and support their development.'" In addition, she had to be ready to 'de-

ploy' when her husband's civilian career required them to relocate.

By all accounts, Heather Beard's crucial decision has paid dividends when she reflects on her daughter's accomplishments.

SEE BEARD ON PAGE 5



Courtney Beard, in her ballerina tutus outfit, crawls through the mud of the Hop Bottom obstacle, at the Beast of the East 10K Mud Run at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Sept. 8. Beard was among the several thousands of civilian and military personnel who ran through mud pits, swamps, ponds, over and under obstacles as they raced against each other and the clock. (Courtesy photo)

BEARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

It is easy to see where Courtney Beard's patriotism and desire to serve her country stems from. Her mother eloquently explains, "Freedom isn't free, and some parents are sacrificing everything (their lives)." Possibly she surmises, "Because they believe that is in the best interest of their children."

History aside, it was pure grit and determination that made Courtney Beard the first female and the first Airman to complete the Army's grueling 18-hour Spur Ride. The Order of the Spur is a Cavalry tradition within the United States Army. The Spur Ride takes those up for the challenge through a grueling series of mental and physical tests. As she was serving with a Calvary Unit during her 2010 deployment to Bagdad, Iraq, Beard was able to compete in, and complete the Spur Ride and earn the honor of being the first female and first Airman to "march, low-crawl and sweat her way into history."

1st Sgt. Brian McCutcheon, U.S. Army, was on hand to provide that extra edge of motivation when on the 14th hour; Beard thought she expended her last ounce of energy. "Finishing the Spur Ride would forever be proof that she could attack any obstacle head on and be successful," he said.

In all that day, twenty-seven participants 'earned their spurs'. With the exception of Beard, they were all male and all Army. Beard knew she earned their respect when the III Corps commander asked her to switch 'from blue to green' and join the Army team.

Though flattered, there is no doubt in Beard's mind that the Air National Guard is the perfect fit for her.

While in high school in Brooklyn, N.Y., Beard was active in the Jr. ROTC program and had extensive interaction with recruiters from all the military branches. "I did my homework," said Beard, as she recalls on how she researched all of her options before taking her oath to be a member of the New Jersey National Guard in July of 2007. "I am definitely re-enlisting."

But Beard wasn't content to stay stateside as a traditional Guardsman. "My leadership knew I wanted to be deployed," she explained. "When the opportunity came in 2010, I accepted."

Voluntarily, her six-month tour in Bagdad - where she served with the 467th Expeditionary Intelligence Squadron - was extended to one year. Beard felt that during the early months overseas she learned the "ins and outs of the job and could stay and help the process run smoother." The extended tour enabled her to "stay out there and make a difference," she said.

The confident staff sergeant currently sees another deployment in her five year plan, but she understands deploying puts her life on hold. "I find the mission to be very important and that is all you want to focus on," said Beard.

Currently, her focus reflects in several strategic directions. Beard recently moved to Aberdeen, Md., where she is working at Aberdeen Proving Grounds as an IT Help Desk technician for Software Engineering Command, Army Material Command.

She is progressing on her studies toward a bachelor's degree in Computer Sciences at Thomas Edison State College. In the meantime, Beard has the distinct honor of being chosen as one of the first ten students accepted into the 'Warrior to Cyber Warrior' Cyber Security training program, where hundreds of applications were submitted.

Beard's unit, the 204th Intelligence Squadron of the 108th Wing, is the first Air National Guard Squadron that is solely dedicated to providing intelligence instruction and training products to the Expeditionary Center's Mobility Air Force Training course. It is the first course of its kind in the intelligence community that integrates active duty, National Guard and reserve students.

Beard is hoping to become a certified instructor for her unit and is considering Officer Candidate School when she finishes her bachelor's degree.

She will have lots of time to look back at her accomplishments, but for now she is driven toward success at an exhilarating pace. She wants to make her father's dream come true, which is to have his children succeed further than he has. As the Airman's creed professes, "I am faithful to a proud heritage, a tradition of honor, a legacy of valor."

With his own storied list of accomplishments, she has her work cut out for her. In addition to being a New Jersey National Guardsman with the 108th Contingency Response Group, Harold Allen Beard Jr. works at Washington D.C. at the Central Office with the Department of Justice.

"He is my professional hero," she proclaims. "He has motivated me. Just by example and the path he has chosen for himself."

Courtney Beard takes personal pride and derives motivation from the Airman's Creed. She can recite it flawlessly and passionately without looking at her notes, as she did recently when former State Command Chief Michael Francis selected her to read it at his retirement.

"I am an American Airman...I will never falter. And I will not fail."

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