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DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS



177th Fighter Wing EOD



The 177th Fighter Wing Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit held their annual clearance operation at Detachment 1, Warren Grove Range May 29 to June 1, 2012. To view more photos of the EOD unit at work, please visit and like our Facebook page at [New Jersey National Guard](#). (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen, 177th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)





Site gives National Guard, Reserve Soldiers easier access to legal assistance

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Joel Quebec Army News Service

FORT JACKSON, S.C. – National Guard and Reserve Soldiers have deployed almost as often as the active duty Soldiers since theater operations began in Iraq and Afghanistan more than 10 years ago. As Citizen-Soldiers and Reservists continue to engage in all corners of the globe, readiness remains a critical concern.

When Soldiers are faced with a legal issue, many do not know where to turn for help and officials say part of the problem is the availability of military attorneys.

“We just don’t have enough lawyers to have one in every unit,” said Army Master Sgt. Denise Underwood, the chief paralegal noncommissioned officer at the 81st Regional Support Command. “When we were having soldier readiness processing, we had Soldiers that said they hadn’t seen a lawyer in years.”

During these SRP events, Underwood said she noticed many of the legal issues were beyond those that are routine, such as wills and powers of attorney.

“Many of the issues presented could not be resolved quickly and when a Soldier is deploying, putting them off until later is not the prime solution,” she said.

Underwood was concerned when Soldiers said lawyers were not in their respective area so they simply would let legal issues fall by the wayside until SRP. This differed from the active duty service members who have a Staff Judge Advocate office right there on the post where they are assigned.

To alleviate this problem, Underwood initiated and helped to organize a way to combine three legal assets: the lawyer, the online Army regulations and the existing legal website known as JAGCNet into one accessible resource where the Soldier can do a self-assessment questionnaire and determine what his or her legal needs are.

“If you combine all three,” Underwood said, “the Soldiers can go to one site and they can answer some of their own questions.”

As not everyone may have a legal question, the new system attempts to point the user in the right direction, linking the relevant regulations to the questions asked on the questionnaire.

“It gives them instant results and also cuts down on the Soldier going to see an attorney when they really don’t need to,” she said.

“The questionnaire asks the Soldier a set of questions that

are designed to determine if they have either a family or other legal situation that requires legal assistance or trial defense service support,” said Army Col. Elena Kusky from the Army Reserve Legal Command.

According to Kusky, the checklist can be used as a part of the annual SRP, but also whenever a Soldier wants to know if a change to a family situation or an administrative action at the unit requires legal support.

Based on the Soldier’s answers to questions, the system will produce a brief legal explanation of the significance of their positive answer and suggest the kind of legal assistance they might need. Once completed, a link to request legal assistance is provided as well as contact information for Legal Command.

All of this was coordinated by Underwood and then Army Brig. Gen. Gill Beck, who was the commanding general of the Army Reserve Legal Command at the time. Beck, now a major general and commander of 81st RSC, completely backed Underwood’s efforts and had her coordinate with Legal Command and the Office of the Judge Advocate General’s Legal Assistance Policy Division which resulted in the online questionnaire.



There was a lot of checking and rechecking of the regulations as well as the technical aspects of adding new features to the existing site, said Underwood, who gives a lot of credit to the webmasters of JAGCNet for their tireless efforts to make the new part of the site fully functional.

During annual training at the 81st RSC, Soldiers were given the opportunity to go on the site and fill out the questionnaire.

“I believe that the questionnaire raised awareness for Soldiers that may have had issues that they were not aware of,” said Army Spc. Stacy Georgia, an 81st RSC supply specialist. “Often times we do not think that certain elements of our lives need attention, and we over look them. The questionnaire brought those issues to the surface.”

After questionnaires are completed, Soldiers can print out a certificate to use as proof of a legal review during the SRP. Results of the questionnaire can be printed and kept for reference when consulting a lawyer.

The questionnaire itself is maintained on the JAGCNet website for public access by all Soldiers. In the future, a link to the questionnaire will be inserted into AKO under the “My Legal, Self Service” portal. <https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/LRR>

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Brig. Gen. James J. Grant, right, Chief of the Joint Staff, along with newly promoted Capt. Kevin Ryan, addresses the 508th Military Police Company during a ceremony at Range 86, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst May 19, 2012. The 508th Military Police was at JBMDL performing their pre-mobilization training in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in July. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Joseph Prieto)



The USO Liberty Bells' singers provide entertainment to several Soldiers and Airmen from the New Jersey National Guard during the Christmas in July event on board the Battleship New Jersey, located at Camden, N.J., June 3. The event was held to raise awareness for Wreaths Across America (WAA). For more than 20 years, WAA places a holiday wreath on the headstones at Arlington National Cemetery. To view more photos of the event, please visit and like our Facebook page at New Jersey National Guard. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen, 177th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

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