



IG Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

October, 1998

SOUTH FORT 2000

By MAJ JOHN DUNCAN

The ongoing initiative to modernize and streamline Fort Polk, better known as South Fort 2000, is steadily making headway across the installation. You may ask how SF2000 applies in the Inspector General arena. Well, the Office of the Inspector General recently made the bold move from "wood" to a fixed facility. We thought we might share "how we did it" information with other directorates who are anticipating a similar move.

Early in 1998, a windstorm blew through Fort Polk causing considerable roof damage to a number of wooden buildings at South Fort. The old office of the Inspector General, across from the Fire Station, was one of those buildings. The decision was made not to spend seven thousand dollars repairing the roof of the old IG building but rather apply it to new construction. The SF2000 general plan called for the IG to occupy building 1943 which was an old Troop Medical Clinic during the 5th Infantry Division's occupation of Fort Polk.

So with an accelerated mission at hand, we set about to formalize a floor plan for the building. We also needed to develop a reasonable movement timetable that would not degrade our customer service. Additionally, we wanted to advertise the move so that our customers would know where we were. We also

continued on page 2

FAMILY SUPPORT

By SFC WARD MILLER

Non-support of family members continues to be a problem throughout the U.S. Army and here at Fort Polk. Noncommissioned officers should know their personnel well enough to identify and perhaps resolve nonsupport problems before the commanders or the Office of the Inspector General becomes involved. Officers and non-commissioned officers should familiarize themselves with AR 608-99, Family Support, Child Custody, and Paternity.

AR 608-99 requires service members to pay support in accordance with support agreements and court orders. In the absence of a court order or agreement, the regulation requires soldiers to provide support at a level generally equivalent to the service member's "Basic Assistance for Housing-With Dependents", (BAH-WITH) rate for their grade. The Commander must consult with their Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) legal advisor on each individual case. No two cases are the same. In accordance with AR 608-99, commanders will respond to all request for assistance from government officials based on court orders and all other inquiries received under this regulation.

Commanders are charged with enforcing the requirement to provide support. However, a commander can only punish for failure to comply with court orders or AR 608-99. Neither the finance office nor the commander can direct a soldier's pay be diverted to family members or dependents even if a court order exists. The commander can order the soldier to pay the support required by a court order, support agreement, or support requirement contained within AR 608-99. Soldiers can be prosecuted for violation of the commander's order or failure to obey the regulation.

If a soldier is collecting BAH and has failed to pay the required support to his family or dependents, the commander must report failure to pay to the finance office. The finance office will then initiate an action to collect the money that the soldier has improperly received. Even if the soldier has not or will not draw BAH, or still has on post housing, it does not relieve that soldier of his/her responsibility to provide support for family members or dependents. Commanders are strongly encouraged to consult with SJA on all non-support issues.

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** South Fort 2000
- 1** Family Support
- 3** Profanity in the Work Place
- 4** The Command Climate Survey
- 5** Earth, Wind and Fire
- 5** Chapter Processing Procedure

continued from page 1

(South Fort 2000 – Con't)



knew we were going to need some help moving. We immediately dropped a request with G3 Plans and Operations for soldier support and a memo to the transportation Motor Pool for a flat-bed truck with a tommy-lift. We went to the Directorate of Public Works (DPW) engineers and dug out the old schematics of the building. Next, we made tracings of the floor plans. We left important things like the location of walls, latrines, doors, and windows on our drawings. We omitted the technical information like wiring and plumbing schematics that would confuse the average person.

Next, we gave every office member a blank schematic and access to keys for the building. All of our employees were given the mission of developing their concept of how the building should be arranged to best serve every member of the IG office and our customers. Shortly thereafter, we sat down collectively and pooled everyone's drawings. Pooling our resources paid big dividends. We got great ideas from everyone, not to mention the fact that we were all involved in the process.

We then handed our floor plan off to the Engineering Plans & Services Division of DPW. Our plan was reviewed for feasibility and renovation costs. After a few tweaks, the plan was approved and turned over to the contracting folks. After several weeks, the plan received final approval and was handed off to a private contractor, Innovative Systems, Inc.

Once the contractor was awarded the renovation project, we arranged to meet with the supervisor, his foremen, and a DPW representative at the building. We walked through the building with the contractor and explained in detail exactly what we envisioned the finished project would look like. We made some changes based upon advice from the contractor and with approval of the DPW representative. These were probably some of the most important changes since they were done before the construction began and based upon advice from the people who actually would be doing the construction.

At this point, the only thing left to do was monitor the construction process for quality control and any "forks in the road". A fork in the road occurs when the contractor runs into a problem and has to make a decision about which way to go. This usually happens early on during the razing process when you start looking at the bowels of the structure. Guiding your contractor on the right fork saves time and money while keeping everyone happy.



The important thing to remember is that once construction starts, you do not go and hide in your shell until it is over. A second key point to remember is that only one "qualified" staff member should do all the talking with the contractor. You cannot have different staff members expressing their opinions and mucking up the process.

Before you know it, construction is complete and you are staring down a serious move. Now is a good time to put an ad in the Guardian and on the Fort Polk channel announcing the pending move and the new location. The folks at the Central Issue Facility were very helpful saving boxes for us to cut down on moving costs. Over a two-week period, we packed up different rooms in our old building until nothing was left but individual offices. We blocked out a week to move and our boss started getting the word out from the Commanding General on down.

The move went very smoothly but was disruptive to getting normal business done. Our plan of a one-week move was realistic. To close out the process, we had items left over in the old building we did not need. We sent out an e-mail asking if anyone needed anything. Everything that was left over after that e-mail message was turned in to the Property Book Office. Lastly, we got the old building turned in to Real Property, which is now on tap for demolition.

Looking back, it was a lot of work but any mission with a good plan is destined for success. Some of the more important keys for success we found were involving everyone early in the planning phase, developing a timetable, advertising our intentions, monitoring construction, and keeping our customers needs in mind throughout the process. Good luck to all other directorates that have to make a move in support of SF2000. It is a tough road to hoe, but you will be better prepared to serve your customers once you are done.



PROFANITY IN THE WORKPLACE

continued from page 1

By SFC WAYNE GODFREY

(FAMILY SUPPORT - Con't)

Language has been around for a long time. History shows that man first learned to communicate through pictures and sign language. Eventually, people began to assign specific sounds to different objects. As cultures progressed, these sounds became words and over time developed into languages. Today some people use words that destroy the character of others rather than to encourage them. These words are called profanity.

Basic Assistance for Housing is paid to soldiers by the military for support of their family members and their dependents. Basic Assistance for Housing is not extra "beer" money for soldiers. In most cases, we find that our soldiers are doing the right thing. Unfortunately, not all family members receive the financial support they need. When that happens, commanders and noncommissioned officers have the responsibility to insure that our soldiers are following court orders and Army Regulation 608-99, Family Support, Child Custody, and Paternity.

The Manual for Courts-Martial addresses profanity in Article 134, Indecent Language. It is a punitive Article and describes indecent language as that which is grossly offensive to modesty, decency or propriety, shocks the moral sense because of its vulgar, filthy, or disgusting nature, or its tendency to incite lustful thought.

Profanity is addressed two more times in the Manual for Courts-Martial. Article 117 (Provoking Speeches or Gestures) discusses language that is "reproachful and provoking" speech. Article 133 (Conduct Unbecoming an Officer and a Gentleman) discusses acts that seriously compromise an officer's professional standing and decency.



"Consideration of Others" is a new Army-wide program used today to help leaders and subordinates successfully communicate within the workplace. It stresses behavior modification for the purpose of getting along with your co-workers. Because of this program, we are able to realize that by nature people are good and very few would willingly do things to offend someone else's feelings. That is what Consideration of Others is all about.

The Army has many programs in place to inform soldiers that respect for others is the right thing to do. The Fort Polk Commanding General addresses this in Policy Letter #23, Equal Opportunity, which talks about equal opportunity and treatment for soldiers, civilians, and their family members. Soldiers and civilians must know they will all be treated fairly in every aspect of performing their mission. Leaders at all levels have an obligation to create and maintain an environment free of discrimination.

General Reimer stated in a letter dated 10 Aug 95, "people remain the cornerstone of readiness." Sophisticated weapons systems and modern technology are of little value without a dedicated, trained team of professional soldiers and civilians. Each treated fairly with dignity and respect in all aspects of daily interaction. We expect all to treat one another as they would want to be treated. As we go through life, it is our responsibility to make an effort to change the way we talk to each other.

The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law of the Department. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or of the command, but wherever possible, are supported by referenced Army regulations, policies or procedures.

THE ARMY'S COMMAND CLIMATE SURVEY



By SFC TOMMY EDWARDS

Effective 1 March 1998, company commanders or company level equivalent commanders are now required to conduct a command climate survey within 90 days of assuming command and annually thereafter. Commanders are required to survey the entire unit and not a sample of the unit.

There will be occasions when the commander does not have all of the unit members available, which is understandable. Maximum participation will prevent the "appearance of" or the actual sampling of any particular group or groups in the unit. By surveying the entire unit, commanders afford each soldier the opportunity to provide their input. This also increases the overall creditability of the data gathered during the survey and further protects the soldier's anonymity.

The program was designed with the intent of making the process easier for commanders to conduct the survey as well as analyze the data. Commanders get a perception of how the soldiers feel in regards to the command climate of their unit. Commanders in turn gain some very valuable information. Commanders can use the information in the development of action plans, when discussing issues that concern soldiers, and for additional data gathering if required.

Unfortunately, not all company commanders have the necessary resources or access to the equipment needed to conduct the automated command climate survey. On the other hand, the manual version of the survey would prove to be very time consuming, less accurate, and does not afford the same level of anonymity for the soldiers. When faced with perceived or factual shortages of time and resources, it remains our responsibility to accomplish the mission to the best of our ability.

Help is available. Company commanders can contact the Fort Polk Inspector General's Office and request assistance with planning and conducting the automated command climate survey. The

commander will be required to complete a basic memorandum for the IG office prior to the session, which provides the IG office with information necessary for planning. The command climate survey program also allows the company commander to develop seven multiple-choice questions and three comment type questions that are unit or event specific.

The Inspector General's Office has fifteen laptop computers that are available for use to conduct the survey. The IG can also provide two Assistant Inspector Generals to conduct the survey. The unit commander can also conduct the automated command climate survey with internal resources or by using the manual process with the written questionnaires. Regardless of the manner utilized, commanders are encouraged to request assistance from this office.

The command climate survey is the commander's tool for assessing the unit in a number of areas. The results of the climate survey are used by the commander to improve the unit and never as a means of comparing units. This program is no longer optional and is supported by the Commanding General. The documentation needed for the program is available via the internet @ <http://www.odsper.army.mil>, (click thru, "INFORMATION INDEX", "HUMAN RESOURCES", to "COMMAND CLIMATE SURVEY"). If you have additional questions, please contact SFC Edwards at 531-2100/7878.



EARTH, WIND, & FIRE

What You Should Know About Smoking

By: MSG DAVID MORGAN

Welcome back to the JRTC & Ft. Polk Inspector General's quarterly newsletter. This article covers the rules for smoking around federally controlled buildings. There are a lot of things you need to know if you are a smoker. I'm going to pass on some easy ways to remember the rules. The bottom line is that AR 600-63 states smoking of tobacco products is banned in Department of the Army occupied workplaces.

Therefore, that brings me to my first helpful tip, **Earth**. The earth is a big place with lots of space. Space means area and area means room. Moreover, according to the rules, the space and area inside of a building is generally a smoke-free zone. There is no such thing as a designated smoking "room"

The second helpful hint is **Wind**. Referring back to AR 600-63, para 4.2b says, "If possible, designated smoking areas will provide a reasonable measure of protection from the elements. However, the designated areas will be at least fifty feet from common points of ingress and egress and will not be located in areas that are commonly used by nonsmokers."

So here is the link. Smoking must be done "outside" in the elements one of which is wind. In addition, the windier it is, the less chance you and your co-workers have of inhaling cancer causing second-hand smoke.

My third buzz word is **Fire**. Well, wait a minute. You're probably saying, hey, no one could smoke if there was not fire. Okay, that may be true, but that is not where I am going with this. What I mean is if you do not follow the rules your boss is likely to "fire" you up. Finally, another reason that one should not smoke in the public workplace is the common courtesy factor or consideration for others. It is a well established fact that cigarettes and other tobacco products cause many premature deaths annually. Second-hand smoke has also been proven to be dangerous. To some people, cigarette smoke is the most annoying thing in the world. To others, it is more than annoyance. Smoking triggers allergic reactions and asthmatic problems for a lot of folks. In this new age of consideration for others, follow the rules and make the world a better place for everybody. These rules above are further expounded on in DOD Instruction 1010.15 – "Smoke-free workplace" & DOD Directive 1010.10 – "Health Promotion." With the wonderful opportunity to share this insight, comes a chance to get on my soapbox. We have a wonderful smoking cessation program offered by the Preventive Medicine Services on Fort

Polk. The class has a very high success rate with trained instructors. The smoking cessation program compares favorably to ones offered in the civilian sector at hundreds of dollars. Thanks for reading and good luck with kicking the habit.

CHAPTER PROCESSING PROCEDURES

HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

By SFC GLORIA KRAUKLIS

The Ft. Polk Inspector General's Office recently conducted a Quality of Life inspection on the chapter processing procedures currently in effect at this installation to determine if soldier's packets are being processed in a timely manner. This inspection was based on recent concerns about the timeliness of chapter processing procedures.

During the inspection, there were no significant trends identified. However, all elements of the chapter process could ultimately streamline their efforts to achieve an "ideal" timeline to complete a chapter.

Based on information gathered during the inspection, it was determined that the average total processing time for chapter packets across the installation required 61 working days. This period of time covers from the beginning of the physical examination or mental evaluation (whichever occurred first) to the date of actual separation from military service.

Once a commander makes the determination that a soldier should be processed for a chapter, every effort should be made to complete all required documentation for that particular chapter in a timely manner. All leaders should be educated on the chapter procedures so those soldiers are afforded every opportunity available to them when being processed for a chapter. Commanders and soldiers should continue to use the Staff Judge Advocate for advice and guidance in all phases of the chapter process.

Commanders and leaders at all levels should understand the terminology and different phases of the chapter process.

It is strongly recommended that soldiers being chaptered should be escorted when scheduling and attending appointments throughout the entire chapter process. This will ensure that the soldier arrives on time for all appointments and is not a no-show.

AR 635-200, Enlisted Personnel, dated 26 Jun 96 is the regulatory guidance for chapter procedures. Please contact SFC Krauklis at 531-2100/7878, if you have any questions or would like a copy of the recent IG report.