

Updates to Unit FRGs and Families

FEB 26th, 2009

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FROM YOUR FRSA:

This past week has been life changing for several Soldiers and Families of our Brigade Ohana.

In light of the many questions and concerns that you may have and also to provide you will as much information related to the Serious Incident that happened last Thursday, this update is almost entirely related to those events.

May we all keep the affected Soldiers and their Families, and the Special Troops Battalion in our hearts and prayers.

Respectfully,
-Adrienne

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A Message for LTC Moses Kaiwi, Commander 29th BSTB—



For the 29th BSTB Family who are not at Camp Virginia, you may have been hearing bits and pieces from other sources concerning our tragic event. I want to take this time to inform you of some of the facts concerning this event.

On 19 February 2009, SPC Walter was a passenger in a vehicle traveling to Camp Arifjan. SPC Cho was the driver, SFC Espinosa was the front passenger. SPC Walter and SPC Guieb were rear passengers. At approximately 2015 hrs (8:15pm) Kuwait time, while traveling south on 7th Ring Road, something occurred that caused the vehicle to skid in towards the median and into the sand. The vehicle also rolled over a few times ending near the median on the northbound traffic lane. 4th ID Soldiers were in a bus traveling northbound and observed the vehicle. They stopped and rendered first aid. Their actions directly contributed to the survival of three of our Soldiers but attempts to revive SPC Walter failed. Serious injuries were sustained by SFC Espinosa and SPC Guieb whereby both will be flown to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. SPC Cho received some injuries and has been assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

We will be having a memorial ceremony here on Camp Virginia on Monday 23FEB09 at 1630 hours (4:30pm).

It is a time of grieving for us. Many will be angry and sad as well as attempting to find resolution on this matter. Our Soldiers involved will more than ever need our prayers and support. We must remain cohesive as a family. When tragedy strikes, a family works through its anger and grief but it still remains a family. We must do the same. We must remain strong... **Forever Strong.**

As for SPC Walter, I believe she was prepared spiritually for this day. Events in her life during this deployment, especially those small seemingly inconsequential events that occur on a daily basis have prepared her for the afterlife. Her heart and spirit were ready. I believe she is in a better place helping to prepare a place for us when the time comes that each of us individually will have to face the afterlife. I am confident that when my time comes, I will see her again.

Very Respectfully,

LTC Moses Kaiwi Jr.
Commander, Camp Virginia
29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion



SPC Cwislyn K. Walter, HHC.

Funeral Service for SPC Cwislyn K. Walter

Funeral Services for SPC Walter on Oahu will be held on Tuesday, March 3rd, 2009 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at Borthwick Mortuary in Honolulu. Borthwick's address is 1330 Maunakea St, Honolulu, HI 96817 (off of Vineyard). Parking is limited. Carpooling is recommended if you will be attending the services.

The following is a link for a map to Borthwick:

http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=1330+Maunakea+Street,+Honolulu,+HI+96817&sl=37.0625,-95.677068&ssp=49.978077,51.591797&safe=on&ie=UTF8&z=17&iwloc=addr

The Family is requesting monetary donations in lieu of flowers as SPC Walter and her Family will be traveling to Pohnpei for Internment Services. If you will be mailing sympathy, condolences or monetary donations to the Family please see the below message on 'Sympathy and Condolences'.

Additional information will follow. Obituary notices are anticipated to appear in this weekend's paper. Please request additional information through your Unit or Unit FRG as opposed to calling the Funeral Home directly.

Sympathy and Condolences

If you would like to mail sympathy or condolences please send them to the following address:

Mr. & Mrs. Kiwis K. Walter
c/o 29th IBCT, HIARNG
91-1227 Enterprise Ave., BLDG 1898
Kapolei, HI 96707

(This address replaces any information previously given)

*** Mrs. Walter's first name is Conception if you would like to address the inside of cards with both parent's first names.***

Injured Soldier Update



SFC Pelias Espinosa

SFC Espinosa is currently receiving medical care at Landstuhl Regional Army Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany. He sustained several serious injuries in the 19FEB09 incident.

Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his Family at this time. More information to follow shortly.



SPC Joyce Guieb

SPC Guieb will be returning shortly to Oahu to receive medical treatment at Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC). She sustained serious injuries in the 19FEB09 incident.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her Family. When she is able to receive visitors, that information will be provided. Please do not contact Tripler directly at this time.



SPC Esther Cho

SPC Cho is recovering in place at the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) in Kuwait. She sustained less serious injuries in the 19FEB09.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her Family and the entire BSTB Ohana at this time.

Casualty Notification Process

In light of the Brigade's recent loss of SPC Walter, and the serious injuries of SFC Espinosa and SPC Guieb, it is important to remind Families of how the Casualty Notification Process works for the United States Army and the Hawaii National Guard. It is very important for you, as a Family Member to know that the military takes casualty notification very seriously, and that there are specific policy and procedures that govern how information is given to affected Families.

If a Soldier dies:

In the event that a Soldier dies, there are a number of processes that are begun, both by the Soldier's Unit and the United States Army. The Casualty Notification System is initiated through Active Duty channels. The official Casualty Notification is received through the Active Duty CAC (Casualty Assistance Center) at Schofield Barracks. They will then contact the Hawaii National Guard and the Brigade. The CAC and the Brigade then initiate plans for contacting the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK). When a Soldier dies, their Family will receive a visit from the Casualty Notification Officer (CNO – Active Duty), who is accompanied by the unit Chaplain and at least one representative from the Soldier's Unit. They will all be dressed in Class A (dress) uniforms. The Family will not receive a phone call from the unit. The Family will not receive a phone call from the FRG. There are really no exceptions to this policy.

Following the CNO, the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) will provide hands on support and guidance to the Family and walk them through all necessary paperwork, funeral services, dealing with the media, and other arrangements that the Family will need help with in the wake of their loss. The Chaplain will also be on hand to provide spiritual support to the Family.

This is just a brief summary of everything that occurs when a Soldier dies. Just remember, the Soldier's Family is contacted first, then notification out to the Unit and Unit Families can occur, with the intent that all of this happens prior to the information being released to the media. An official press release usually occurs 24 hours after the Soldier's Family has been contacted.

The utmost respect, compassion and care are taken in notifying the Family of the Fallen.

Also remember, your FRG is here to support and assist you, but they are not Casualty Notification Officers. They may call after you and then they receive notification to offer their condolences and ask how they can help you and your Family in your time of grief.

Casualty Notification Process - Continued

If a Soldier is seriously injured:

If your Soldier is seriously injured, this means that they need further medical treatment than can be provided in the combat zone. In all likelihood they will be stabilized and transported first to Landstuhl Regional Army Medical Center in Germany, and then on to Walter Reed AMC (In D.C.), Brooke's AMC (in Texas) or Tripler here in Hawaii. The amount of time that your Soldier will spend at any medical facility is under the direction of their attending physician. The physician will determine if and when Family Members may be flown to be with their Soldier.

For the unit, they are notified at the same time that the official Casualty Notification System is notified. Just as when a Soldier dies, it will be the Active Duty CAC (Casualty Assistance Center) that makes the initial telephonic contact with the affected Family. The local CAC will also be in contact with the Rear Detachment to ensure follow-up and assistance is given to the Family. Once the official notification occurs, the unit can release information to the FRGs/Families and an official press release may be issued.

If a Soldier is injured but returned to duty:

If your Soldier receives 'minor' injuries (injuries that do not require moving your soldier to Germany or the Mainland for additional medical treatment) your Soldier will be treated by the local hospital or medical treatment facility. Your Soldier will be encouraged by their command to call you and let you know they are alright. Because the Soldier is treated in place, their injuries are not linked into the Casualty Assistance Center (CAC) channels. The CAC is not required to call you. This is good, this means your Soldier is not seriously injured and will return to duty shortly.

NOTE: Your Soldier should have filled out a *DD93, Emergency Data Sheet* which lists who they want contacted in the event of their death or serious injury. This is the PNOK (Primary Next of Kin) that the CAC uses to contact the Family directly. It is very important that Soldier's update this form. This form should be updated if a Soldier gets married, divorced, widowed, etc. to reflect who they want to notified. These forms are updated at a minimum once a year to catch changes, but Soldiers are still responsible for making sure their form is updated and accurate.

New*Director of Psychological Health for the Hawaii National Guard*****

Introducing ***Marcy Houston***, the new Director of Psychological Health for the Hawaii National Guard, in her own words:

My name is Marcy Houston, and I am the Director of Psychological Health for the Hawaii National Guard. I have been married to a United States Marine for 17 years and have three wonderful daughters ages 14, 11 and 7. In the course of being a military spouse, we have lived in North Carolina, California, Okinawa Japan, Michigan and now Hawaii. I have to say the weather in Hawaii beats them all. My husband just hit his 20 year mark with the Marines in December and is headed to Iraq in April. I have my bachelor's degree in Psychology from California State University and my master's degree in Counseling and Personnel Services from the University of Maryland. I worked for the Navy/Marine Corps in Okinawa from 2001-2005 as a Counseling therapy intern, Victim Advocate, and then a Family Advocacy Counselor. From 2005-2008 I worked for Family and Children Services in Michigan as a Family Advocate and Parenting Group facilitator. I was hired by Ceridian in January and I am excited to get going with this program.

As the Director of Psychological Health, it is the mission of the National Guard Psychological Health program to advocate and support National Guard members and families by promoting mental fitness and personal wellness for operational readiness. I am available 24/7 via email or blackberry to members and their families. I provide confidential support primarily focused on assessment, referral, resource identification and case management. For instance if a member or family member contacts me, I will complete an assessment and help determine the kind of assistance that will be most beneficial. Once these are identified and discussed with the family, then I will follow up to make sure that the plan in place is working for the family. I am strengths-based, meaning that I look at the strengths already in the place with the family and ways to utilize what is already working for the family. Additionally I can make referrals to other agencies if the need arises.

I know from experience that military life is both rewarding and difficult for everyone involved. It is my hope that service members and families will utilize my services to help with that stress. I have personally seen the difficulties that service members can have reintegrating to civilian life after having been deployed, and also their difficulties in achieving their mission when they are worried about personal problems from home. I ensure that as a military spouse, I will treat each family as I would want to be treated, and as I would want my husband to be treated.

Thank you,

Marcy Houston

*****We welcome Marcy to the Guard and specifically the Brigade Ohana*****