

# THE PHOENIX WORD



Out of the fire... Back into the fight

March 2013

## Healing through horse therapy

By

Suzanne Ovel  
Editor

Throughout her life, horses have been a part of Lt. Col. Cathie Raaf's world— when participating in equine competitions, joining a mounted sheriff's posse, or horseback riding recreationally.

Now, the horses she's loved and been around since she was 4 years old are helping her recover as she heals from injuries sustained overseas.

Raaf, a Soldier with Bravo Company and a Reservist who's worked as a chemical officer and a civil affairs officer, joined the Warrior Transition Battalion in December due to injuries in her right foot and the effects of a mild traumatic brain injury. She first injured her foot when carrying heavy packs in Afghanistan resulted in multiple stress fractures; she reinjured it while running in Kuwait. The mild TBI is another injury that is lingering— Raaf has issues with balance, vision and hearing.

She now participates in the Rainier Therapeutic Riding program and rides her own horse Aramis to help with her healing and morale.

The eight-week equine therapy program brings in WTB Soldiers and other Veterans once a week to stables in Yelm to work

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## Free childcare

SFAC's Children's Activities Center opens



Photo by Spc. Jazz Burney

Twyla Allen, lead teacher at the Soldier and Family Center's Children Activities Center, plays a matching game with Andrea Doty, 3, here Feb. 6.

By

Spc. Aaron Breitbarth  
Writer

Recently all of the Soldier and Family Assistance Center programs became a parking lot away from the Madigan Army Medical Center. In opening the new building, 9059, the SFAC also opened a new Children's Activities Center which provides free hourly childcare to Warrior Transition Battalion Soldiers and Army Wounded Warrior Program Veterans whenever they have an appointment scheduled on the Madigan campus.

"It's a free service," said Lead Teacher Twyla Allen. "They get quality childcare." Allen is one of two caregivers running the new CAC.

"It's set up for Soldiers (who) have doctor's appointments ... if they have spouses, they can go with them," said Allen.

According to Child and Youth School Services Liaison Karen Zeiders, Allen is responsible for helping the children develop responsible ideas and actions. "Even though we're hourly, we do have a curriculum," Zeiders said. "The curriculum changes each month and it covers all the

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# Families get voices heard

## DoD focus group lets families share views on Soldier care

Hello Warrior Transition Battalion! We'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a very important program that will be here later this month. The Department of Defense Task Force on the Care, Management, and Transition of Recovering Wounded, Ill, and Injured Members of the Armed Forces, commonly known as the Recovering Warrior Task Force, will be visiting Joint Base Lewis-McChord on March 25 and 26. Their visit is formal and the facts they are collecting will be used in their annual report directly to Congress on the state of DoD's care for wounded, ill and injured servicemembers.

The RWTF's role is to gather and analyze information from a range of sources in order to provide the best possible recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on the care and support provided to recovering servicemembers and their families. The task force members seek to find methods that can enhance the ways in which our servicemembers are supported and to improve the experience for your families as well.

In the past, their report included recommendations for the swift publication of several specific pieces of policy guidance, such as the Integrated Disability Evaluation System and the electronic health records initiatives, recommendations targeting wounded, ill and injured servicemembers, and recommendations aimed at improving support for recovering servicemembers' families and caregivers, among others.

The RWTF members will meet with our Warrior Transition Battalion senior leaders and participate in focus groups with recovering Soldiers and your families. What we'd



Lt. Col. Jason Wing



Command Sgt. Maj. Sans Gilmore

like to emphasize is how important it is for the family members to participate if you can. There is a dinner meeting at the Soldier and Family

bring these up through your Soldier's chain of command (i.e. squad leader, first sergeant, company commander) or through our ombudsmen on base.

As we write this article, there are only six couples signed up to participate that Monday evening. It would be great if it were 18 instead. Don't worry, you can bring your children and your children will be cared for in the SFAC daycare rooms during the dinner. To sign up for the focus group, contact Family Readiness Support Assistant Bill Janssen at 253-312-2457.

Other groups meeting with the task force will include the junior enlisted, mid-grade enlisted and junior officers. Please ask your chain of command for all the information and do participate in this great opportunity to share with this

group about how the WTB helps our most wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers and their families.

Thanks for your service. Out of the fire, back into the fight!

*“This is your opportunity as family members to have your voices heard at the highest levels.”*

**-Lt. Col. Jason Wing  
and Command Sgt. Maj. Sans Gilmore**

Assistance Center on Monday, March 25; the dinner starts at 4:30 p.m. and the focus group starts at 5:30 p.m. We'd like to see a lot of participation in this event so that the RWTF has a good chance to understand the Soldier care and recovery system's successes and areas needing improvement from the widest possible perspective.

It's important to realize that this is your opportunity as family members to have your voices heard at the highest levels to share what you think is working well with Soldier care and what you think needs improvement. Since the task force is making high-level recommendations for Soldier care, we recommend that those of you who meet with them focus on system-wide best practices and recommendations. As always, if you have any concerns or recommendations that can be addressed at our battalion level, we encourage you to

### THE PHOENIX WORD

The Phoenix Word is an unofficial monthly newsletter for the Warrior Transition Battalion. Contents in this publication are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Madigan Army Medical Center or the Warrior Transition Battalion. For more information about The Phoenix Word, or to submit a story idea, contact the WTB Public Affairs Office at 253-312-9358.

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# CBWTU offers 'home remedy'



Photos courtesy of Capt. Jolynn Newsome

Sgt. 1st Class Wade Scott reenlists with the help of Capt. Jolynn Newsome, a nurse case manager with the Community-Based Warrior Transition Unit-California, at the CBWTU headquarters building in Sacramento, Calif., on Feb. 22.

By

**Suzanne Ovel**  
Editor

When Sgt. 1st Class Wade Scott came back from Afghanistan severely injured, he found that one of the most potent treatments for his recovery came in the form of three of the people he loves the most.

"I don't think that I have the words to tell you how important it is when you're really injured to be with your family," said Scott, who thanks to being in the Community-Based Warrior Transition Unit-California is able to live at home with his wife and two kids while receiving medical care.

The military policeman had a long road to recovery after he was injured in a firefight in Afghanistan in May 2011; he walked away from the fight under his own power, but with multiple bullet wounds in his left hand, upper arm, and left side. His body armor absorbed three rounds, which "saved my life," said Scott, who earned the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

Medevac flights landed him at Fort Bliss, Texas, where his family joined him for a month at the Fisher House there. His wife served as his confidant and helped him with activities of daily living, and his kids, now 11 and 13 years old, helped as they could, to include changing his bandages.

"That was amazingly important as well," said Scott of having his family with him in Texas. When he was able to, the California National Guard Soldier joined the CBWTU in September of that year, moving back home to California and receiving care at area medical facilities.

"It's better for the kids that I'm here; it's nice to have Dad around ... and they know that I'm okay. They contribute to my care," said Scott.

They've been with him throughout his multiple surgeries, including his two hand surgeries he had at the University of California last year.

"So because I got in the (CBWTU) program, I ended up with one of the best hand surgeons in the world. I'm very, very, very thankful," he said.

His surgeon successfully completed the delicate tasks of relocating and reattaching nerves in his hand to make it work again.

"The functionality has returned. I'll never be a watchmaker ... but the important parts of the use of my

hand are back, because of the amazing staff at the hospital," said Scott, lauding the care he's received.

While being in the CBWTU allowed him access to great care in his home state, Scott also stressed the importance of his home unit's support to his recovery.

While he was in Texas, high-ranking California National Guard leadership changed their travel plans to check up on him, and when he got back to California, his unit helped advocate for him, including authorizing tanker boots for him that he could put on with one hand.

"It's that sort of sense of belonging that facilitates recovery as well," he said.

In fact, Scott's work site agreement is with his home unit, helping out the provost officer and planning exercises.

"The nice thing about this is that all of the things I'm doing now are relevant to what I'll be doing when I go back to normal, so I'm really not as behind as I would've been otherwise," said Scott, who reenlisted Feb. 22 for six more years and plans to be released from active duty and return to his Guard unit fulltime in April.

Although he doesn't know if he'll deploy to Afghanistan again, Scott does plan on staying in uniform for quite a while.

"I've wanted to be in the military since I was 6, and I'm still happy doing it and I want to keep doing it."

# Company kudos

## Awards

Staff Sgt. Robert MacFann, Alpha Company, *Warrior Transition Soldier of the Month*

Sgt. Steve Beaty, A Co., *Army Commendation Medal*

Spc. Tara Gentry, Bravo Co., *Army Good Conduct Medal*

Spc. John Ojinaga, B Co., *AGCM*

Spc. Alexander Vasquez, B Co., *ACGM*

## Promotions

Sgt. Steve Beaty, A Co.

Spc. Andrew Lotts, A Co.

## Hails

Capt. Torre Wright, Headquarters and Headquarters Company

Staff Sgt. Eric Barnett, A Co.

Staff Sgt. Chris Corrente, A Co.

Staff Sgt. Alyosius Domme, A Co.

Staff Sgt. William Goff, A Co.

Staff Sgt. Sijer Harder, B Co.

Staff Sgt. Steven Minters, B Co.

Staff Sgt. Jon Soyke, A Co.

Staff Sgt. Mark Zika, B Co.

Sgt. Anthony Allen, B Co.

Sgt. Shane Pons, B Co.

Topeka Johnson, A Co.

## Fairwells

Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Creelman, A Co.

Sgt. 1st Class Petelo Mareko, A Co.

Staff Sgt. Clifton Goble, A Co.

Staff Sgt. Edward Roelofs, A Co.

## Retirement

Lt. Col. Michael Yates, A Co.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Gibson, Charlie Co.

Sgt. Jason Shellabarger, C Co.

Spc. John Mentzer, C Co.

Spc. Patrick Grisolono, C Co.

Spc. Nathan Smith, C Co.

## Education

Lt. Col. Michael Yates, A Co., *earned master's degree in organizational leadership*

Capt. Brandon Trapp, A Co., *accepted into Albert Einstein School of Medicine*

Sgt. Jonte Scott, C Co., *earned associate's degree in general studies*

Spc. Edward Gaglione, C Co., *earned bachelor's of science in nursing*

Juan Celis, B Co., *earned master's degree in organizational management*

## Fit for duty

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ronald Spliethof, C Co.

Sgt. Brian Fowler, B Co.

Spc. Chad Knapp, C Co.

Spc. Matthew Toledo, C Co.

Pfc. Patrick Kelly, B Co.

## Kids' Honor Roll

Maj. Laura Khan, C Co., *new baby girl in family*

Spc. Paul Sanchez, HHC, *new baby boy in family*

## Awarding Heroism



Photos by Spc. Jazz Burney

**Sgt. Steve Beaty, Alpha Company, receives the Army Commendation Medal here Feb. 15 from Montana Gov. Steve Bullock and Maj. Gen. Matthew Quinn, the Adjutant General for the State of Montana. Other Montana National Guard leadership also recognized Beaty for his award, honoring his actions which may have reduced the severity of a suicide bomber in Afghanistan.**

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with horses volunteered by their owners.

For Raaf, equine therapy gives her the opportunity to be around the horses she loves while helping her TBI symptoms.

“My eyes are not able to focus as quickly, they’re not able to track, so if I move real fast I have to wait for the rest of the room to catch up,” said Raaf, noting that riding trains her eyes to track more, therefore helping with her sense of balance.

When she’s not participating as a rider, Raaf volunteers to help other Soldiers and Veterans as a side walker—ensuring the rider’s safety, helping the rider with balance and reinforcing instructions.

A nurse in her civilian career, Raaf said that in general equine therapy can help riders increase core muscles, attain better posture, help with leg strength, improve balance and more.

Fellow WTB Soldier Spc. Steve Chamberlain also attests to the benefits of equine therapy.

“I’ve gotten more out of horse therapy than I could’ve even imagined,” said Chamberlain, Charlie Co. He participates in both the Rainier Therapeutic Riding program and in Heartbeat Serving Wounded Warriors’ hippotherapy riding program.

“It teaches me to center my back properly, to relax it. It teaches me to breathe properly,” said Chamberlain, who sustained injuries in an improvised explosive device blast in Afghanistan in 2011. Once wheelchair-bound, he now finds his mood improves and his confidence builds by being on a horse.



Photo by Suzanne Ovel

**Rainier Therapeutic Riding volunteer Ann Hendley helps Chief Warrant Officer 3 Steve Elliott put a bridle on his horse March. 4 in Yelm.**

“They’re very in tuned with their rider,” said Chamberlain, noting that by his horse’s reaction, he can tell if he needs to adjust his responses.

Raaf also tries to stay in tune with the riders she works with as a volunteer, and in fact pays attention to the horses to see how the Soldiers are doing.

“You can tell how a Soldier’s feeling by looking at how their horse is,” she said.

Raaf said that from volunteering she gets “the emotional gratification (of) knowing that you’re helping somebody else.”

*The next Rainier Therapeutic Riding courses start April 8 and June 17. More advanced courses are available as well.*

From CAC, Page 1

different areas of development for all children.”

Allen said the CAC is up to date in all training and possible care needs, and also in ways that children like to play. The center is split into three parts: the infant-to-toddler area, the preschool and school-age area and the outside playground. On the school-age side there are two computers with learning games and on both sides there are age-appropriate books, music and toys.

“The environment here is definitely set up for kids,” said Zeiders.

The CAC is about more than playing with toys. Both Zeiders and Allen are constantly engaging the children. “I make sure I speak and

spend time with each child all the time,” said Allen. “Your kids will get a lot of one-on-one time.”

Allen is a caregiver with over 25 years experience with early childhood. She spent nine years as a kindergarten teacher, 17 years working with CYSS day cares and for six years Allen worked as a Department of Defense teachers’ aide, all while working with other programs as well.

Zeiders also works with the children. She, too, has more than 20 years experience working with children and families. Zeiders has also trained CYSS teachers/caregivers and like Allen she has experience in the private sector as well.

To use this CAC, Soldiers must register their children with CYSS; however, temporary passes can be

given on site. Once registered with CYSS children can be registered for School of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills classes like music, dance, martial arts, gymnastics, swimming and tutoring. Parents can also register their children for sports leagues and camps from the new CAC.

“Any parent-central registrations can be done here,” Zeiders said.

Unlike other CACs this location does not have a meal program, but it does provide light snacks.

The CAC is located across from the main WTB SFAC offices and is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on every WTB duty day. Any child six weeks old or older is eligible to receive care. Zeiders said, “Appointments are encouraged but are not necessary if there’s space available.”

# DoD, VA integrate records faster

By

**Jim Garamone**

Armed Forces Press Service

The Departments of Defense and Veteran Affairs will speed implementation of the Integrated Electronic Health Record program, allowing servicemembers and Veterans better access and better medical care.

“This approach is affordable, achievable, and if we refocus our efforts we believe we can achieve the key goal of a seamless system for health records between VA and DoD on a greatly accelerated schedule,” said former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.

The departments are able to step up the records program because of advances in information technology while working with existing platforms. The original goal was to have the system deployed by 2018. Now the expectation is by the end of next year.

The goal is to provide one set of electronic records from entry into the military through Veteran status. The program is designed to allow servicemembers or Veterans to download information and present it to doctors or other healthcare providers without delays.

Previously, servicemembers had to hand carry paper files from DoD facilities to Veterans Affairs.

Once complete, the record program will provide DoD and VA clinicians with the complete medical records of



Department of Defense photo

**The Departments of Defense and Veteran Affairs are speeding up the integration of health records.**

time data by September.

The departments are upgrading the graphical user interface to display the new standardized VA and DoD healthcare data by the end of this year, Shinseki said.

“By this summer, DoD and VA will field and begin conducting a pilot program on the common interface for doctors at seven joint rehab centers across the country and we’ll also expand its use at two other sites,” Panetta said.

“Rather than building a single, integrated system from scratch, we will focus our immediate efforts on integrating VA and DoD health data as quickly as possible by upgrading our existing systems,” Panetta said.

more than 18 million servicemembers, Veterans and their beneficiaries.

“We’ve agreed to improve interoperability before the end of this year by standardizing health care data,” VA Secretary Eric Shinseki said. The two departments will also accelerate the exchange of real-

## Career Corner

Soldiers can learn more about the following opportunities by contacting Cherie Westphal at 253-967-3713.

### Job, Career Fairs

*Career and Education Readiness Opportunity Fair*

Soldiers are invited to a career fair April 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Soldier and Family Assistance Center’s classroom.

### Internship positions

*Army Material Command*

Receive training in the fields of electrician, electronics digital computer mechanic, equipment trainee, logistics management, and materials expediter.

*Seattle Recruiting Command*

Receive training as an operations specialist and administrative as-

sistant, to include working on reports and giving briefs.

*Department of Homeland Security*  
Receive training as an administrative assistant, to include preparing legal cases, and working on projects and data systems.

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife*

Receive training in information technology, to include processing data, operating software and troubleshooting.

### Training opportunities

*Transition Training Academy*

Soldiers, Veterans and their spouses are invited to take free information technology courses with the Wounded Warrior Project. The next courses start the week of March 18; register at [www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

## Why You Should Consider OWF

Below are reasons from the Army Career and Alumni Program on why you should consider an Operation Warfighter internship:

◆ By offering federal civilian internships, [Operation Warfighter offers the best way here to prepare for a civilian career.](#)

◆ As an intern, you [acquire direct transferable experience for your resume](#), including learning the language of a new career field.

◆ You can [see firsthand what a civilian career](#) you are considering really looks like.

◆ You can [contribute to a real mission](#) while learning new skills.

# March 2013



For more information on many of these events, see the briefs on pages 6, 7 and 8.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 • <u>MWR- Under-ground Seattle tour</u>	7	8	9 • <u>MWR- Bull riding</u>
10	11	12 • <u>Chaplain's breakfast</u>	13	14	15	16 • <u>MWR- Gold panning demonstration</u>
17 • <u>MWR- Gold panning demonstration</u>	18	19	20 • <u>Newcomers' dinner</u> , WTB billets	21	22 • <u>MWR- Chili cook-off</u>	23 • <u>MWR- Salmon fishing trip</u> • <u>MWR-NRA banquet</u>
24	25 • <u>DoD focus group</u>	26	27	28	29 • <u>MWR- Jazzbones</u> • <u>HHC Change of Command</u>	30
31 • <u>Easter dinner</u>						

## Great family resources

### DoD family focus group

Warrior Transition Battalion family members are invited to join in a focus group with the Department of Defense's Real Warrior Task Force on March 25 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Soldier and Family Assistance Center's classroom. Take advantage of this opportunity to have your voice be heard at the highest levels on what is working with Soldier care and what could use improvement. Come early for a free dinner at 4:30 p.m. Childcare is available on request; preregister with the SFAC's Child, Youth and School Services. Sign up for the focus group with Family Readiness Support Assistant Bill Janssen at 253-312-2457.

### Town hall

Family members are invited to the town hall April 4 at 9:30 a.m. at Letterman Auditorium to see a special speaker and learn more about Veterans' Affairs centers.

### Join Parent Advisory Committee

Military parents are invited to attend the CYSS' Parent Advisory Committee this school year. The next meetings are scheduled for April 25 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Cascade Community Center, and July 25 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Habanero Mexican Grill at the Whispering Firs Golf Course on McChord Field. For more information on these meetings, call 253-967-6485.

### Become a volunteer

The family readiness team is always looking for volunteers to help plan activities and programs, and to provide support to other spouses. Anyone can volunteer to join the FRT, and can also serve as a group officer (such as secretary, activities coordinator, etc.). For more information or to volunteer, contact FRSA Bill Janssen at 253-312-2457.

### Financial Readiness classes

Soldiers can attend free financial readiness classes at the Soldier and Family Assistance Center on the second and fourth Wednesdays each month from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Class topics vary each month. For more information and to sign up, contact Frederica Norman at 253-967-1226.

### Free tax filing assistance

Soldiers, cadre and family members can get free assistance with filing their taxes at the SFAC. Assistance is available on Mondays and Wednesdays by appointment only; to make appointments, call 253-966-8433. Walk-in appointments are available on Fridays until 3 p.m.

### Chili cook-off

Soldiers, cadre, staff and family are invited to attend the SFAC's 5th Annual Chili Cook-Off on March 22 at 11 a.m. at the Warrior Transition Battalion billets' courtyard. The event also features live music, kids' activities, a jalapeno-eating contest and more.

### Easter dinner

Soldiers, cadre, staff and family are invited to an Easter dinner March 31 at 4 p.m. in the WTB's billets' multipurpose room.

### Chaplain events

Soldiers, cadre, staff and family are invited to the following Unit Ministry Team events:

- ◆Chaplain's Breakfast, March 12 at 7:45 a.m. in the billets' multipurpose room.
- ◆Bring Your Own Lunch Bible Study, each Thursday from 12 to 1 p.m. in the chaplain's office, room 112 in the billets.

### Recreations activities

Soldiers, cadre and family members are invited to take part in upcoming recreations events, including:

- ◆Underground Seattle tour, March 6
- ◆Bull riding event, March 9
- ◆Gold panning demo, March 16
- ◆Gold panning demo, March 17

## Splashing Around



Photo by Suzanne Ovel

**Bravo and Charlie Company Soldiers fight for the ball during a water polo game at Soldier's Field House on Feb. 28. Nearly 70 Warrior Transition Battalion Soldiers, cadre and staff joined in a morning of water polo and other aquatics, with Alpha Company winning the overall competition.**

- ◆Chili cookoff, March 22
- ◆Salmon fishing, March 23
- ◆NRA banquet, March 23
- ◆Jazzbones concert, March 29
- ◆Seattle aquarium, April 3
- ◆Daffodil Parade, April 13

For more information on upcoming events, contact Lisa Crowell at 253-966-8644.

### Newcomers' dinner

New Soldiers and family members are invited to join in a newcomers' briefing and dinner March 20 at the WTB billets' multipurpose room at 4:30 p.m.

### Family member scholarships

The Fort Lewis Family Member Scholarship Fund is accepting scholarship applications until April 10. Applications can be downloaded from [www.fortlewis scholarship.com](http://www.fortlewis scholarship.com). Family members of active duty servicemembers, retirees and surviving family members are eligible to receive scholarships without regard to family income or rank of the service-

member. Applications are judged on multiple criteria including essay response, grades, community involvement and leadership.

### Operation Baby Shower

Expecting couples and new parents are invited to attend a free baby shower at the McChord Field Club and Community Center March 16 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The event offers door prizes, games, free hors d'oeuvres and more. For more information, call 253-982-0718.

### Operation Purple Camp

Parents can sign up their children for this summer's Operation Purple Camps, which focus on kids whose parents are, were, or are going to be deployed. Operation Purple Camp offers camps throughout the country, including one in Ellensburg the week of June 23 to 28 for 8 to 10 year olds. For more information and to register for any of the camps, visit [www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/operation-purple/traditional-camps](http://www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/operation-purple/traditional-camps).