



Army celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

Story by Sgt. 1st Class
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Equal Opportunity Office

In 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week, and this observance was expanded in 1988 to a month-long celebration.

During this month, America celebrates the traditions, ancestry and unique experiences of those who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico, the countries of Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Throughout history, Hispanic Americans have enriched the American culture and way of life, and we recognize the millions of Hispanic Americans who have sacrificed so much for our great nation during this month-long celebration.

Hispanic Americans became the largest minority group in the United States in 2002. Hispanics currently make up 15.1 percent of the United States' total population.

They include sub-groups such as Mexican American, Cuban American, Colombian American, Dominican American, Puerto Rican American, Salvadoran American and many

more. Hispanic Americans have been living in what is now known as present day United States since 1565.

Hispanic Americans have made major contributions to the development of the nation and the American culture. They have made their mark in all fields such as politics, science, law, sports, music and, of course, the military.

Hispanics have filled top positions in the U.S. government with Mexican American Alberto Gonzales serving as U.S. Attorney General and Cuban-born Carlos Gutierrez as Secretary of Commerce.

In 1998, Luis Caldera, a Mexican American, became the highest ranking Hispanic to hold office in America when he became Secretary of the Army. Currently there are 23 Hispanics in the House of Representatives and six in Senate.

Hispanics have also made their mark in sports, with at least 30 percent of all major league baseball players being born in Latin America, coming mostly from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

Such names as Roberto Clemente of Puerto Rico and other major



Spc. Josh LeCappelain, Multi-National Division-Center Lt. Col. Steven Parker, Pfc. Jacqueline Olvera, Maj. Guillermo Santiago, Sgt. Glenda Sigaran and Lt. Col. Vance McLeod cut a cake during Multi-National Division-Center's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration Sept. 18 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation 124 building on Camp Victory.

league baseball hall-of-famers include Orlando Cepeda, Juan Marichal and Luis Aparicio. Since the 1950s, a number of Hispanic American music performers have gained widespread popularity, including Julio Iglesias, Jennifer Lopez, Carlos Santana, Gloria Estefan and the group, Los Lobos.

Hispanics have also influenced the arts with painters such as John Valez and actors such as Edward James Olmos. Whether it is politics, entertainment or food, Hispanic Americans have influenced and changed the American way of life.

Hispanic Americans having fought for the defense of our Nation in the Civil War, World War II, the Ko-

rean War, Vietnam, Desert Shield and, of course, Iraq and Afghanistan. The military currently has tens of thousands of Hispanic Americans serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hispanics make up about 9.49 percent of the overall enlisted force and 3.8 percent of the officer corps. Currently Hispanics hold 1.36 percent of flag billets within the overall military.

To date Hispanics have been awarded 42 Medals of Honor, making them the nation's highest ethnic group to be recognized. Hispanic Americans have contributed much to the American way of life and that is why from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15 we celebrate and recognize their many accomplishments.

Army makes changes in death gratuity

Story and photo by
Pfc. Eric J. Glassey

13th Public Affairs Det.

The U.S. Army updated its policy on death gratuity and next of kin notification paperwork; requiring all personnel to use the new January 2008 version of DD Form 93.

“Death gratuity is a lump sum gratuitous payment made by the Army to eligible beneficiaries of a member who dies on active duty including full-time active guard/reserve personnel,” said Capt. Amy Stanley, S1, Task Force Dragon, Multi-National Corps – Iraq. “Its purpose is to help the survivors in their readjustment and to aid them in meeting immediate expenses incurred. At the present time, the amount of death gratuity is \$100,000.”

“The major change is that in May 2007, you could contribute only to one person,” Stan-

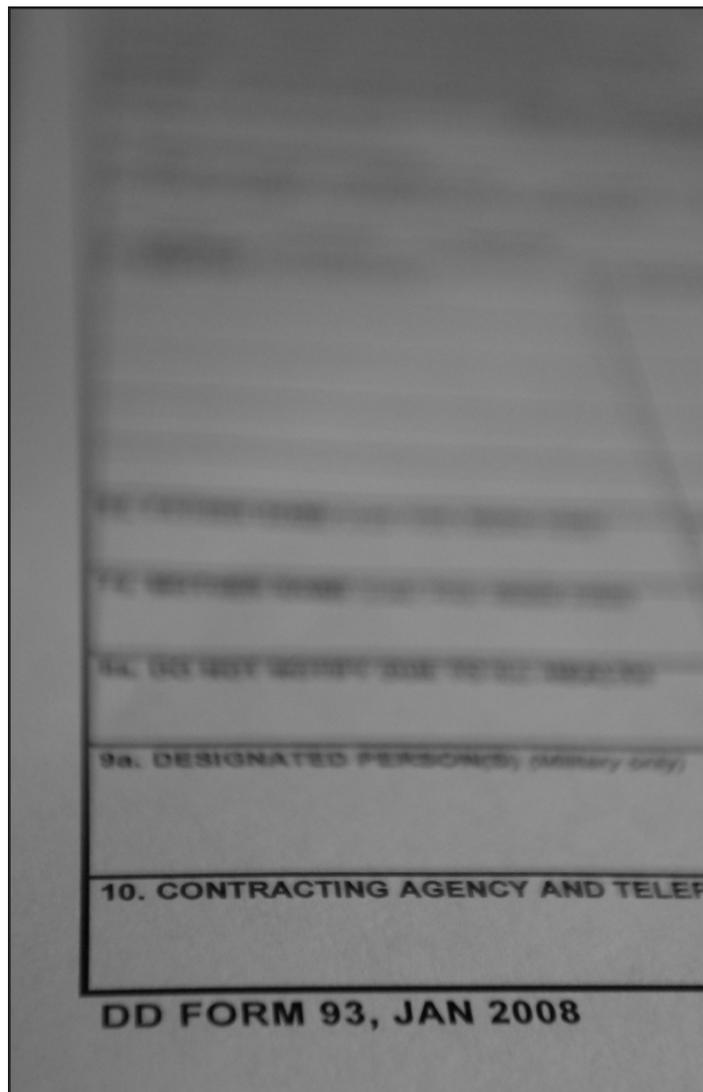
ley said. “As of January 2008 a Soldier can distribute his \$100,000 in allotments of \$10,000. It gives Soldiers more options.”

These new policies open up avenues of possibilities for who Soldiers’ can give their death gratuity.

“If you don’t leave all your money to your spouse, then they will have to be notified,” Chief Warrant Officer Jenaro Nazario, human resources technician, S1, Task Force Dragon, MNC-I. “The Army will not tell them who the money is being sent to, but they will tell the spouse that you won’t be leaving the whole 100 percent to them.”

It is mandatory that everyone must update their DD form 93 on the new January 2008 forms. People going on leave or pass must have a copy of the new DD 93 form.

“It is the responsibility of the commanders and first sergeants



Record of Emergency Data forms, the DD Form 93, have a new Jan. 2008 version. DD Form 93 is for death gratuity and next of kin notification.

to pass this information along, but it is the Soldiers’ responsibility to update their records and make sure

they are accurate,” Nazario said. “They need to have their desires known before they pass away.”



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Combat stress team teaches warrior resilience

Story and photo by
Spc. Samuel J. Phillips

MNC-IPAO

The 98th Combat Stress Control Prevention Team conducted a Warrior Resilience Training brief Sept. 12 at Hope Chapel on Camp Victory. This was the last of four briefs held on Victory Base Complex before the 98th CSC headed out to Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

The training is an educational class designed to enhance warrior resiliency and posttraumatic growth through the use of rational emotive behavior therapy. Students are trained to focus upon virtue, character and emotional self-regulation by constructing and maintaining a personally resilient phi-

losophy, said Maj. Thomas Jarrett, prevention team officer in charge, 98th CSC.

“We try to remind Soldiers how durable they are as human beings,” Jarrett said.

Since 300 B.C., cultures have embraced a basic stoic idea, Jarrett said. This idea states that people can only fully control four things and they are all internal; their ultimate direction or goals, their beliefs, their emotions and their actions and behaviors.

“With this stoic idea, along with the ABC theory of emotions we encourage post-traumatic growth and the growth of resiliency, endurance and character within Soldiers,” Jarrett said.

The ABC theory of emotions, propounded by famed psychologist, Dr. Albert El-

lis, states that A, activating events, along with B, a persons beliefs, causes C, emotional consequences, Jarrett said. If someone replaces his irrational beliefs he can change the emotions that come from the situation.

“Through this, Soldiers can limit anger, rage and depression and experience healthier, growth inspiring emotions such as irritation, sorrow and grief,” Jarrett said.

“We teach the Soldiers the terms and coach them so that when the time comes they will be strengthened by their deployment experiences, even if they are negative or painful,” said Sgt. Michael Venuto, prevention team noncommissioned officer in charge, 98th CSC.

Having already bestowed this knowledge on approximately 4,500 Soldiers in theater the prevention team works closely with chaplains and the surgeon general’s office to find out where they are needed the most, Venuto said.

After each course attendees are given a feedback form to get a chance to let the prevention team know how affective the brief was, Jarrett said. “We have received excellent feedback.”

“The course has been extremely successful,” Jarrett said, “but we are always looking to improve it and teach the Soldiers everything that we can.”



Sgt. Michael Venuto, prevention team noncommissioned officer in charge, 98th Combat Stress Control, gives instruction about warrior resilience in the final brief of a four-part series at Hope Chapel, Camp Victory Sept. 12.

Rosh Hashanah is here



Chaplain David Goldstron, Jewish chaplain, Multi-National Division - Center leads the covering of the scrolls during Rosh Hashanah at Victory Chapel Sept 30.

**Story and photo by
Pfc. Eric J. Glassey**

13th Public Affairs Det.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur make up the most important holiday of the Jewish faith.

Together, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are a 10-day period of repentance and atonement. This period marks a new year for the Jewish community as it receives forgiveness for the past year's sins and are given a fresh start.

"This is a time of reflection," said Chaplain David Goldstron, Jewish chaplain, Multi-National Division - Center. "Starting anew while seeking forgiveness for those we have wronged."

"It is a chance of a lifetime to have the freedom

and time for fellowship in Iraq with fellow Soldiers," Capt. Karl Korpel, preventive medical officer, Task Force 115. "It is also a pleasant surprise to see the civilians who we can share this holiday with."

"I'm glad I get the opportunity to be there for Jewish Soldiers in Iraq," Goldstron said. "It is very rare in a deployment to take time and reflect on our lives. We are so busy seven days of the week. During this time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we have to take stock and examine our lives as we go on a new year."

The final services of Yom Kippur will be held Oct. 8 at 5 p.m. until Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m. at Victory Chapel, Bldg 31.

Every vote counts



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Krawczyk, MNC-I PAO

California Secretary of State Debra Bowen talks with 1st Lt. Autumn Horton, voting assistance officer, Company A, 4th Infantry Division, about voting issues facing servicemembers deployed to Iraq at Al Faw Palace Sept. 30. Bowen, along with four other U.S. secretaries of states visited Camp Victory to answer questions and address concerns servicemembers may have regarding their ballots being counted in the election. "Every ballot is counted and every vote can make a difference," Bowen said. "Some servicemembers think that their vote doesn't count or that they count absentee ballots differently than ballots cast stateside. The truth, Bowen said, is as soon as the ballot arrives at its destination it is opened and placed in a pile of other ballots. When the polls close all the ballots are picked up and dropped off at the collection point. The counters have no idea if that ballot came from just down the street or across the world, she added.