

# Soldiers urged to get treatment for stress

BY ERIK SLAVIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP RED CLOUD, South Korea — U.S. Army Garrison Red Cloud officials urged soldiers and civilians at a Thursday briefing in the theater to get help if they are dealing with post-combat stress.

Camp Stanley operations officer Capt. Lis-Mary Wilson's briefing also encouraged supervisors to watch for signs of post-traumatic stress disorder in their workers.

The message was delivered, but its success ultimately depends on soldiers and civilians feeling comfortable enough to seek help from chaplains, doctors and social workers.

"No one has the right to judge

you. They don't know what you saw or what you've done," Wilson told the 30 to 40 soldiers and civilians in attendance, along with about 20 South Korean soldiers.

Soldiers won't be punished for seeking help, Wilson said.

But how will a soldier who misses time at his post for long-term care be seen in the eyes of a commander? What will care from a psychiatrist mean to a promotion board?

Maj. Carol Highsmith, a chaplain who observed the briefing, says she's heard soldiers express these fears.

"For soldiers to get help and spend time there in the (medical clinic), it takes time away from the mission," Highsmith said. "If it's long-term — that's a tough one."

At the same time, post-traumatic stress "doesn't get better if they don't ask for help," Highsmith said.

Wilson emphasized the Army wants soldiers to get help if they need it, that soldiers suffering from PTSD or brain injuries aren't at their best and can negatively impact their mission without care.

The same goes for traumatic brain injuries, like concussions, caused by anything from sports to explosions, Wilson said.

Soldiers with mild brain injuries may think they are fine because they lack a visible injury. However, they may display anxiety, lack of focus and a host of other symptoms similar to

post-traumatic stress, Highsmith said.

In either case — but especially for someone suffering from post-combat stress — talking with someone and simply acknowledging the pain can go a long way toward healing, Highsmith said.

If talking to a friend or supervisor about their experience isn't the solution, officials said, chaplains and doctors, who can refer someone to social-service workers if necessary, are available.

Everyone deals with post-combat stress after returning from a war zone, Wilson said. The deployment circumstances often dictate the level of stress.

Soldiers need to self-evaluate their post-combat stress level for their sake and for their families'

as soon as they come back, Wilson said.

"We're different, whether we realize it or not," she said.

Currently, there is no support group in USAG Red Cloud for those dealing with post-combat stress.

But at Yongsan Garrison, two chaplains with extensive combat-zone experience run a program called the OIF/OEF Soldiers in Arms Support Group. They welcome anyone who may be suffering from combat stress, who wants to help others or simply wants to talk about their combat-zone experiences.

For information, call military chaplain Capt. Glenn Palmer at 010-9145-5496.

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## Armed with paddle, plywood and plastic



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Sailors from Combined Bachelor Housing at Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan, paddle across the water on the way to winning their heat Thursday in the Navy's annual boat regatta on Lake Ogawara. Team members Joyell Stafford-Wright, Daniel Dockery, Joseph Cook, Gregory Kincaid, Christopher Delapena and Antonio Billard, all second class petty officers, went on to take the regatta trophy. Their USS Gun-deck was made of plywood, plastic tubes, screws and "a lot of duct tape," the sailors said.

## Marine denies abuse charges of ex-girlfriend

BY CINDY FISHER  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Marine accused of trying to choke his girlfriend with a belt June 25, 2006, took the stand Thursday to tell his side of the story.

Cpl. Tristan R. Williams, 23, with Headquarters Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group told a jury that his former girlfriend, Seaman Daevita Dumas, was lying Wednesday when she described an abusive relationship in which, she said, Williams hit her. She testified that two days before the choking incident, he pushed her into a fan, causing her to cut her back.

"I never choked her," Williams testified, also denying that he ever hit or punched her or pushed her into a fan.

Williams said Dumas was the abuser in the relationship and that he only pushed her or grabbed her arms to keep her from hitting, kicking or biting him.

The defense showed a photo taken by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service of what was described as a bite mark in Williams' neck, and a Marine friend testified to seeing Dumas hit Williams.

Williams said that on June 25, 2006, Dumas was never even in his room and that he played video games from 8 to about 10 p.m. with Cpl. Walker Jennings, whose room shares a common area with his.

Jennings testified that he was with Williams during that time, saying the two split a six-pack of beer. He said he went to sleep about 10 p.m. and has no knowledge of what might have happened after that.

Dumas returned to the stand Thursday to reiterate that she was in Williams' room that night from 6 to 11:15 p.m., and that she never saw Jennings.

The jury was expected to begin deliberating Friday.

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## Corpsman guilty of lying to get child into school

BY WILL MORRIS  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Navy corpsman was found guilty Thursday of lying to school officials about the birth date of his daughter so he could enroll her in kindergarten a year early.

A jury found the petty officer first class guilty of larceny, forgery, wrongfully impeding an investigation, obtaining government services under false pretenses and two counts of making false official statements.

The jury found the sailor not guilty of assault.

Prosecutors said that during the 2006-07 school year he signed papers and altered documents to make his daughter appear 5 years old, the cut-off age for enrollment in kindergarten in the Department of Defense Dependents

Schools system.

They also said that once his forgery was discovered, he snatched incriminating documents away from a Bechtel Elementary School official, and then lied about the location of the documents during an investigation by his chain of command, Headquarters Company, 7th Communications Battalion, on Camp Hansen.

The prosecution claimed the sailor, motivated by financial problems, was trying to avoid spending money on day care.

Company 1st Sgt. Johnny Higdon testified Wednesday about the sailor's alleged financial problems, telling the court that his

command had received several phone calls from his debtors.

During questioning Wednesday by his attorney, Capt. Kristy Milton, the sailor said he wrote the wrong birth date on the forms by mistake. He claimed he was advised to enroll his daughter in a school environment to help her get over a sexual assault that allegedly took place in Hawaii.

In his closing arguments, Capt. Andrew Beckwith tried to focus the attention away from the issue of the alleged sexual assault, and back to sailor's crimes.

"This case is not about the accused's daughter. Whatever the motive of the accused," Beckwith

said. "He did various criminal acts and must be held accountable under the law."

In her closing arguments, Milton said the military's witnesses were unreliable.

Responding to the sailor's claim Wednesday that Bechtel officials were lying, Beckwith said, "The only person with a motive to lie is the accused."

Sentencing was to begin at 8 a.m. Friday.

Stars and Stripes does not identify the families of children who are suspected victims of sexual assault.

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### Correction

Text in an Aug. 31 Page 1 photo illustration should have stated that the Army and Air Force Exchange Service lay-away program remains active but stores are limiting the kinds of items customers can put on hold and shortening the time they can pay for them.