

Carl Brashear, 'MAN OF HONOR,' dies



Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Public Affairs

Retired Navy diver Carl Brashear died July 25 at 2:35 p.m. at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth of respiratory and heart failure.

The retired master chief was 75 and became known throughout the world after actor Cuba Gooding Jr. portrayed Brashear in the movie, "Men of Honor."

Brashear joined the Navy in 1948 at the age of 17. He was a pioneer in the Navy as the first black deep sea diver, the first black master diver and the first person in naval history to be restored to full active duty as an amputee, the result of a leg injury he sustained during a salvage operation.

He was the first amputee to be advanced to the rank of master chief petty officer. Brashear became the only amputee deep-sea diver to reach the status of master diver, and he was the only black man to ever become master diver of the U.S. Navy, a position he held from 1975 to 1977.

"Carl Brashear was a man of integrity. He was well-loved and admired by the hospital staff," said Rear Adm. Thomas Cullison, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth commander. "It was an honor to provide the care for the American hero. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family members."

Brashear's son, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Phillip Brashear, a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army, is on emergency leave from Iraq and was with his father in his final hours.



Photo courtesy of U.S.A.F. Staff Sgt. Scott Ash

Academy-award winner Cuba Gooding Jr. (left) applauds as retired Master Chief Petty Officer Carl M. Brashear, the Navy's first African-American diver, and Defense Secretary William S. Cohen display the Outstanding Public Service Award Cohen presented to Brashear for 42 years of combined military and federal civilian service.

CNO statement on passing of Carl M. Brashear

Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

Every Sailor in our Navy joins me today in mourning the death of Master Chief Boatswain's Mate (master diver) Carl M. Brashear, as true an American hero as ever lived. We extend to his family our thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathies.

It would be easy in remembering his incredible life to focus on one aspect or another -

his humble, yet proud, beginnings in rural Kentucky; the discrimination he suffered at the hands of racist superiors and colleagues; the list of all the "firsts" he accomplished in the dangerous world of Navy diving; the raw, physical courage he exhibited in overcoming what would be for many a debilitating injury.

But focusing only on such things would be shortsighted. For in doing so, we obscure from history and from our heritage

the real greatness of the man. We must - as he always did - look at the whole, not at the parts.

Carl Brashear wasn't just a trailblazing African-American. He wasn't just a superb and skilled diver. He was a good husband and father...a patriot...a leader. He was a friend who friends cherished, and a Sailor who Sailors admired. He represented in his poise and in his character something larger and more dignified than the trappings of military rank and

position, no matter how hard-earned they proved to be.

Put simply, Carl Brashear was the very best of men. He was living proof that, in a world which can at times be unfair and uncompromising, persistence and sheer determination trumps all. He once recalled wryly during an interview that, as a chief petty officer dive instructor, his young students bemoaned the fact that Brashear simply "had no quitting sense." He was as tough on

them as he was on himself.

And that, I believe, is his greatest legacy - the one thing we ought never to forget about this remarkable naval hero. He leaves behind many terrific and improbable accomplishments, but the greatest is his example of toughness and leadership. It says all we really need to know about him.

Carl Brashear made us all better, and we - as a Navy and as a nation - are going to miss him sorely.

Federal Voting Assistance Program kicks into high gear

Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

The Federal Voting Assistance Program office is pulling out the stops to ensure all service members and their families who wish to can vote.

Polli Brunelli, the program's chief, said the program has learned from experience and has put in place a system to make it relatively painless for service members and their families to vote in 2006 mid-term elections.

And, she added, service members and their families want to vote. They generally vote in greater percentage than the general population, Brunelli said. She also stressed that these votes count. Absentee ballots decided a number of elections in 2004. "Election officials count every absentee ballot,"

Brunelli said.

The program covers not only military personnel, but also DoD civilians and DoD contractors. It depends on dedicated officers and noncommissioned officers at unit level. Each unit has a voting assistance officer and they are the primary points of contact for service members casting absentee ballots.

A number of changes are being implemented in this election cycle. Some states will now send ballots to requesters via e-mail. Others will fax the ballots. Each state is responsible for voting by its citizens, so the laws and programs offered vary from state to state.

Other changes include a revised Federal Postcard Application form.

"It's bigger and better and easier to read," Brunelli said. "We have several blocks on there for (voters) to put alternative addresses if they are on

the move. There is also a place to put their e-mail address. This is very important because local election officials want to be able to communicate to voters."

This is particularly helpful for reserve-component personnel called to active duty. For instance, a Minnesota National Guardsman may go through training in Mississippi before deploying. The Guardsman can put the alternative address on the request for the ballot.

Brunelli's office is working with the U.S. Postal Service to ensure expedited mail service for ballots. This started in 2004 and they had great success with it, she said.

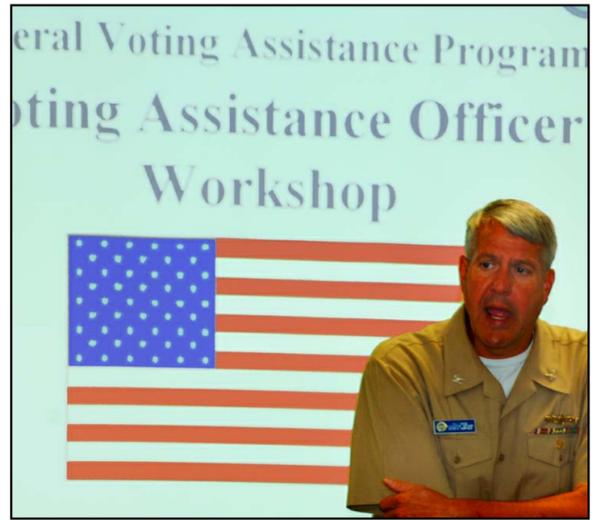
Ballots will arrive to service members in September or October. To be sure votes arrive on time, Brunelli is telling service members to mail in their voted ballots the week of Oct. 8 to 14.

Brunelli said the biggest problem the program confronts is outdated addresses. Folks who have moved since the 2004 election need to submit an updated federal postcard application.

If all things work perfectly - and they usually do - service members will receive their ballots from local election official and return them without a hitch. But problems can happen: the address is wrong, the mail can't get to an isolated area in a timely manner, and so on. In such cases, service members can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot.

"It doesn't matter what ballot you get ... vote it," Brunelli said. "If the state ballot arrives after (submitting a write-in ballot), they should vote that, too. Local election officials will sort that out at their end."

For more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program, visit www.fvap.gov.



U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Charles A. Ordoqui

Capt. Bill Crow, executive officer, Naval Station Norfolk, addresses officers and senior enlisted voting assistance officers from various commands in the Atlantic Fleet on the importance of voting by absentee ballot.

STORY IDEAS

Contact the HNN editor for guidelines and story/photo submission requirements:

Phone: (808) 473-2888

Email: hnn@honoluluadvertiser.com

Hawai'i Navy News

Birdhouse skateboard exhibition



Photo by Laarni Gedo

Tony Hawk's Birdhouse pro skateboarders kicked it up Hawaiian-style at the Navy Exchange at Pearl Harbor on July 22. Skaters Brian Sumner, Steve Nesser and Willy Santos showcased their talent during the exhibition.

Skylark Central

RIMPAC SHIPS

The names of 32 RIMPAC ships are in the puzzle. How many can you find?

Q Y X P A R U A U P Q G Q N S U Z U G M L N W C S
 P G G A L G O N Q U I N S O C K B L A N C O Y W V
 H L O U I S V I L L E A S R K U E N N O W G N U J
 U E D L L Y Z G E O M N E W Z R O A L S K E E X P
 B O N H O M M E R I C H A R D O Y W Y S B Z U I V
 D H A A S J I R D H H N F K R S O G A C I H C K Q
 A W M M A R I A T E G U I A O H C S Y I W I P N K
 A Y M I N O R K N A P O G L F I Q O S R M N V G S
 H A O L G E E N E E F A H C M O B I L E B A Y Q S
 R S C T E W E T C Y R Y T Y V A N C O U V E R N C
 R T B O L Y T O S T W G E R O M H S U R M S P N W
 J N P N E O S J B D V E R P A M N A W M F B E T F
 P U O H S G X E H D G F S C Z U B D R A N K I N M
 T I C V H C F N G D L Y X T Q V T L T B J U D A N
 U S D S B R Y K W Y P I Q G Y W S S C N A A M U O



Know your Navy

Q. What is the most common shotgun used in the Navy?

Last week's question...
 What level of classified material does not require controlled routing?
 Answer...
 Confidential





Here's what's going on at Navy Region Hawai'i!

Editor's note: Every effort has been made to provide the most up-to-date information at the time of publication. However, scheduling of these events is subject to change. It is recommended that you call the contact numbers for the individual events to determine whether or not the activity will be held. For more information (FMI): visit www.greatlifehawaii.com



Outdoor Adventure Events
August
 5: Kahana Valley hike, 9 a.m., \$7. Register by Aug. 2.
 6: Rock climbing, 8 a.m., \$70. Register by Aug. 2.

COMICS ON DUTY WORLD TOUR
 The Comics on Duty World Tour, a free comedy show sponsored by AT&T and Navy Entertainment, will be presented from 8-9:30 p.m. **today** at RIMPAC Central, located next to The Banyans. Laugh 'til you cry with Steve Bills, Gary Brightwell, Scott Henry and Robert Hawkins. The show is adult-themed and open to all military-affiliated personnel 18 years and older. No tickets are needed. FMI: 473-0606 or visit www.greatlifehawaii.com.

CONCERT IN THE PARK
 The Pacific Fleet Band Wind Ensemble will present a salute to the ships and Sailors of all of the RIMPAC nations during the next segment of the Concert in the Park series at 6:30 p.m. **today**. The free concert will be held on the grassy knoll behind The Banyans at Naval Station Pearl Harbor. Attire is casual aloha wear. The next scheduled concert will begin at 6 p.m. **Aug. 25** and will feature a special guest performance by the Marine Forces Pacific Wind Ensemble. Boxed dinners for the concerts can be pre-ordered for \$5.50 from "A Catered Experience" at The Banyans by calling 473-1706 by the Tuesday before the concert. FMI: 473-0606.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLE AUCTION
 Navy Region Hawai'i Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) will host a government vehicle auction from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. **Saturday**. The auction lot will be at Ford Island (take the third right after entering the roundabout, proceed to the end of the road and turn right). The auction is open to all military-affiliated personnel as well as the general public. The general public can park at Rainbow Bay Marina where a

free shuttle service will transport people to and from the sale lot every half hour from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. FMI: 422-2975.



SUPER GARAGE SALE
 MWR at Naval Station Pearl Harbor will host a Super Garage Sale from 8 a.m.-noon **Aug. 5** at Richardson Field. All military-affiliated sellers and crafters can apply for their own 10-foot-by-10-foot space for a fee by visiting the Navy Information, Ticket and Travel office or by going online at www.greatlifehawaii.com. Space is limited; early registration is recommended. Admission to the garage sale is free and open to the general public. FMI: 473-0606.

DOCKING STATION NOW OPEN
 The Docking Station, the newest eatery in town, is now open at Naval Station Pearl Harbor near Club Pearl. Breakfast and lunch are served between 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Try bagels, soup or salads at Einstein Bros. If you're a meat lover, try Bluestown Barbeque where they serve ribs, roast pork or local style specials. The eatery offers indoor and outdoor seating. FMI: 422-5282.

PERSONAL PILATES
 Register for a private, one-on-one training session on the Pilates reformer machine at the Power Point Fitness Center at Barbers Point. The exercise machine will improve alignment, lengthen your spine and increase flexibility. The cost is \$25 for 30 minutes. Reservations are required. FMI: 682-5145.

OFFICIAL SOUVENIR RIMPAC 2006 COIN NOW ON SALE AT ITT
 Visit any Information, Tickets and Travel office to pick up an official Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) coin for \$5. The heavy brass coin displays the official RIMPAC logo and the Hawai'i State Seal.

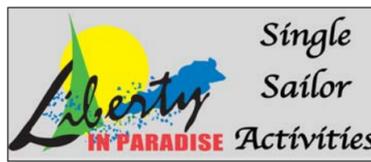
FREE WEEKEND SAILING CLASSES
 Free weekend adult sailing classes are

offered each weekend by MWR at Rainbow Bay Marina. Learn how to sail during this 16-hour course. Classes run for two consecutive weekends from 1-5 p.m. FMI: 473-0279.

NAVY MARINE GOLF COURSE OPENS FRONT NINE
 Although the golf course is still under renovation, the front nine at the Navy Marine Golf Course is open for play. The back nine and range will continue to be closed for a few more months. FMI: 471-0142.

DEEP-SEA FISHING
 Go deep-sea fishing and catch the big one aboard the "Coreene C," a 47-foot sport fishing boat that holds the I.G.F.A. World Record for Unlimited Class: 1805-pound blue marlin. Full and half charters are offered. The cost includes bait, tackle and equipment. FMI: call the Rainbow Bay Marina at 473-0279 or Capt. Joe Irvin at 386-9024.

WHALE WATCHING SPECIALS
 Enjoy whale watching on a Pacific Splash Whale Watching cruise. Navy ITT offices have an assortment of cruise options to fit patrons schedules and budgets. FMI: 473-1190.



July 28: Movie marathon with breakfast, time to be announced, \$15.
July 29: Learn to surf (includes barbecue), time to be announced, \$10.
July 30: Honolulu tour, time to be announced, \$10.
July 31: Deep sea fishing, time to be announced, \$110.
Aug 1: Jet ski trip (one rider, 30 min.), time to be announced, \$65.
Aug. 2: Hawaiian Waters Adventure Park, time to be announced, \$30.

Weekly events:

Sunday: Chess tournament, 6:30 p.m.
Monday: 8-Ball tournament (Beeman Center)- 7 p.m.
Tuesday: 8-Ball tournament - 7 p.m.
Wednesday: Game show - 6:30 p.m.
Thursday: 9-Ball Pool tournament - 7 p.m.

Community Calendar

To have your activity or event featured in the Community Calendar, e-mail your requests to hnm@honoluluadvertiser.com or fax 473-2876. Deadline is Thursday for the following week's issue. Items will run on a space available basis and must be resubmitted every four weeks.

July

28 - Motorcycle Safety Rodeo - The Schofield installation safety office will host an all-day Motorcycle Safety Rodeo from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Wheeler Army Airfield (AAF). The duty-day activity is open to all military motorcyclists and their family members. Sign-in is by 10 a.m. The rodeo will be held on the Kamehameha Highway end of the runway near Kawamura Gate and is open to all ID card holders of all military services. Riders and passengers must wear all required protective gear to enter Wheeler AAF and participate. FMI or to volunteer: 656-4150.

August

7 - FBI career seminar - Learn about the requirements for applying to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) by attending an FBI career seminar from 10-11 a.m. at building 267, room 2, Marine Corps Base Hawai'i - Kaneohe. FMI: 257-7790/7795.

29 - 3rd Annual International Women's Leadership Conference - Join Gov. Linda Lingle and other women leaders at the conference from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Hawai'i Ballroom of the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel and Resort. Government/military rates are available. The event will also feature Rear Adm. Sally Brice-O'Hara, Commander, Coast Guard District 14; Karen P. Hughes, U.S. undersecretary of state for diplomacy and public affairs; Zainab Al-Suwaij, executive director, American Islamic Congress; Gov. Grace Padaca, Isabela Province, Philippines; and a special videotaped message from Oprah Winfrey. The event is open to all military active duty, Reserve, Guard and spouses. FMI or to register: <http://www.iwlchi.org> or call 586-0081.

September

22-23 (and Oct. 1-2) - High Holy Days at Aloha Jewish Chapel - Rabbi Maurice Kaprow, deputy fleet chaplain of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, will officiate. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 22 - Rosh Hashana (evening). 9 a.m. Sept. 23 - Rosh Hashana (morning). 5:45 p.m. Oct. 1 - Yom Kippur (evening). 9 a.m. Oct. 2 - Yom Kippur (day).

At a Glance

University of Phoenix Hawai'i campus adds hours of operation at Tripler/Fort Shafter education complex - The University of Phoenix Hawai'i Campus has extended counseling hours at the Tripler/Fort Shafter Education Center Complex, building 102, room 109A, to two days a week. The office will now be open every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. as well as every Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Counseling will no longer be offered on Mondays. The center provides information about the university's educational programs, as well as financial aid assistance, and can help guide prospective students through the enrollment process. The University of Phoenix Hawai'i Campus has four campuses on Oahu, which are close to most of Oahu's military bases: Mililani Learning Center, Windward Learning Center, Honolulu Main Campus and Kapolei Learning Center. FMI: Ivy Wong at 536-2686, ext. 35148 or ivy.wong@phoenix.edu.

USO needs volunteers - The USO at Hickam Air Force Base AMC terminal is seeking volunteers. Times and dates vary. FMI: email adelina.lopez@navy.mil.

How to contact TriWest/TRICARE services - Beneficiaries can contact TriWest with enrollment; Primary Care Manager and address changes; program benefits questions; claims status; fee payments and locating network providers in the area by calling 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378), visiting their Web site at www.triwest.com, or visiting TRICARE Service Centers located at Makalapa Medical Clinic and Kaneohe Bay Medical Clinic.

Looking for a few good dads - The Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) at Naval Station Pearl Harbor is looking for volunteers to help with Boot Camp for New Dads. FMI: Chet Adessa at 473-4222, ext. 272 or email chester.adessa@navy.mil.

NEX price matching - Through the Navy Exchange price matching policy, the NEX will match the price of any identical item sold in any local store. Customers may provide proof of the lower price and the NEX will match it. If the price difference is under \$5, the store will match it on the spot. Some restrictions apply to the policy. Please see a sales associate for more information.

The American Red Cross needs volunteer instructors - for cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid classes. Free training is provided. Volunteers must make a commitment to teach eight classes a year and have at least one year left in the area. FMI: 449-0166.

Shop and win - The 2006 Shop NEX bumper stickers are available at any Navy Exchange location. Place a bumper sticker on your car for your chance to win a \$25 gift certificate from your Navy Exchange; winners are selected weekly. Winners are then entered in a grand prize drawing for a \$2,000 shopping spree.

AT THE MOVIES

MOVIE CALL	
Sharkey Theater Naval Station Pearl Harbor (473-0726)	
TODAY 7:00 p.m. The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (PG-13)	
SATURDAY 2:30 p.m. Cars (G) 4:45 p.m. X-Men: The Last Stand (PG-13) 7:00 p.m. The Break Up (PG-13)	
SUNDAY 2:30 p.m. Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties (PG) 4:30 p.m. Cars (G) 7:00 p.m. The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (PG-13)	
THURSDAY 7:00 p.m. Nacho Libre (PG)	
Memorial Theater Hickam Air Force Base (449-2239)	
TODAY 7:00 p.m. Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties (PG)	
SATURDAY 2:00 p.m. Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties (PG) 7:00 p.m. Nacho Libre (PG)	
SUNDAY 7:00 p.m. The Lake House (PG)	
WEDNESDAY 7:00 p.m. The Lake House (PG)	
THURSDAY 7:00 p.m. Nacho Libre (PG)	
Sgt. Smith Theater Schofield Barracks (624-2585)	
TODAY 7:00 p.m. Cars (G)	
SATURDAY 2:00 p.m. Cars (G) 7:00 p.m. The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (PG-13)	
SUNDAY 2:00 p.m. The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (PG-13)	
WEDNESDAY 7:00 p.m. Cars (G)	
THURSDAY 7:00 p.m. The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (PG-13)	



The Break Up
 Pushed to the breaking-point after their latest, "why can't you do this one little thing for me?" argument, art dealer Brooke calls it quits with her boyfriend, Gary, who hosts bus tours of Chicago. What follows is a series of remedies, war tactics, overtures and underminings suggested by the former couple's friends, confidantes and the occasional total stranger.



Cars
 Lightning McQueen, a hotshot rookie race car driven to succeed, discovers that life is about the journey, not the finish line, when he finds himself unexpectedly detoured in the sleepy Route 66 town of Radiator Springs.

The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift
 Sean Boswell is an outsider who attempts to define himself as a hot-headed, underdog street racer. Although racing provides a temporary escape from an unhappy home and the superficial world around him, it has also made Sean

unpopular with the local authorities. To avoid jail time, Sean is sent to live with his gruff, estranged father, a career military-man stationed in Tokyo.



Garfield: A Tail of Two kitties
 When Garfield follows his owner, Jon Arbuckle, to England, the U.K. may never recover, as Garfield is mistaken for a look-alike, regal cat who has inherited a castle. The nefarious Lord Dargis is determined to do away with Garfield, so he can turn the castle into a resort. Garfield's bigger, better, more purrfect world is soon turned upside down in this tale of two kitties.

The Lake House
 An independent-mind-



ed doctor who once occupied an unusual lakeside home begins exchanging love letters with its newest resident, a frustrated architect. When they discover that they're actually living two years apart, they must try to unravel the mystery behind their extraordinary romance before it's too late.

Nacho Libre
 Nacho is a man with-



out skills who grew up in a Mexican monastery. As the monastery's cook, Nacho cares deeply for the orphans he feeds, but his food is terrible. He realizes he must hatch a plan to make money to buy better food and if in doing so Nacho can impress the lovely Sister Encarnacion, that would be a big plus. When Nacho is struck by the idea to earn money as a Lucha Libre wrestler, he finds that he has a natural, raw talent for wrestling.

X-Men: The Last Stand



The continuing adventures of the superpowered group, the X-Men, led by Professor Xavier, and based at his school for gifted students, as they try to foster good will for mutants like themselves, in a world where some people are born with extraordinary powers, and many ordinary humans fear them for it.

TRICARE beneficiaries dial in for diabetes support

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

TRICARE beneficiaries with diabetes have a new, convenient support tool at their fingertips.

TriWest Healthcare Alliance has launched a new phone-in support group forum in response to suggestions from TRICARE beneficiaries who spotted the need for diabetes support.

"People who have had diabetes for a long time have expressed a need for a forum where they can discuss their feelings about having diabetes," said Kathi Sobera, director of TriWest's Population Health Improvement department. "This program is free to eligible beneficiaries under the



age of 65, regardless of their benefit plan or other services they may be receiving."

The diabetes support group is open to beneficiaries and family members. Up to 15 people can participate

per session. To enroll, call toll-free to 1-888-259-9378 and ask for the Diabetes Forum. The forums are held at 10 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month and at 4 p.m. on the third

Thursday (times are Mountain Time).

The program encourages participants to speak openly and honestly about their experiences with diabetes and is facilitated by its developer, Jackie Magyar, a dietitian and a certified diabetes educator.

"This program provides a safe environment for beneficiaries with diabetes to share how their disease affects their lives and share experiences with others going through the same thing," Magyar said.

Future plans for this program include adding guest speakers to address specific questions and providing more sessions throughout the month.

Diabetes warning signs

The symptoms of type one diabetes may include:

- Increased thirst.
- Increased hunger (especially after eating).
- Dry mouth.
- Frequent urination.
- Unexplained weight loss (even though you are eating and feel hungry).
- Fatigue (weak, tired feeling).
- Blurred vision.
- Headaches.
- Loss of consciousness (rare).

Type two diabetes is usually not diagnosed until complications have occurred. Most often, there are no symptoms or a very gradual development of the above symptoms. In fact, about a third of all people who have type two diabetes

don't know they have it. When hyperglycemia (high blood sugar) occurs, the symptoms can be the same as those listed above.

Other symptoms of type two diabetes may include:

- Slow-healing sores or cuts.
- Itching of the skin (usually around the vaginal or groin area).
- Frequent yeast infections.
- Recent weight gain.
- Velvety dark skin changes of the neck, armpit and groin, called acanthosis nigricans.
- Numbness and tingling of the hands and feet.
- Decreased vision.
- Impotency.

Visit www.triwest.com for more information.

'SchoolQuest' helps military parents, students find their way

Rudi Williams

American Forces Press Service

An organization devoted to the unique education challenges that face the children of military families is using the World Wide Web to help transitioning parents and students get information about schools across the nation.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) launched "SchoolQuest" during its eighth annual conference in Houston last week that featured the theme, "Reaching New Heights for Children."

"SchoolQuest is tailored

toward individuals and also families finding information they need about schools in different areas of the country," said MCEC's chairman of the board, retired Army Gen. Tom Schwartz.

MCEC officials touted SchoolQuest as a powerful Web tool, backed by boots-on-the-ground research, dedicated to helping families achieve a seamless academic and social transition for their children during a move. SchoolQuest provides a safe and secure environment to consider a child's educational and extracurricular needs in a new area, they emphasized.

"SchoolQuest joins the Military Child Education Coalition to weave a compre-

hensive network of support for transitioning families," Schwartz noted. "These transitioning families need help and needed a support tool. In SchoolQuest, we're giving them that tool and it's Web-based. Kids are into the Web and parents are starting to get into it and we're into it with SchoolQuest. It's available at no charge."

The MCEC chairman noted that many services available on the Web require a membership or per-use fee.

"How many things [do] you get free today? Not much," he said. "But you get SchoolQuest, one of the best tools you could have for your kids and your family and it's absolutely free. And it's for

military and civilian kids and we're going to make a difference. It's an effective way for us to help these families and we're excited about it."

Through SchoolQuest, MCEC is trying to help families and kids before they move, the general noted.

"We don't want to just start moving them out and then they face these challenges and say, 'Oh my gosh, I've discovered this and I've discovered that,'" he said. "We want to get them ready beforehand."

Schwartz said a need prompted MCEC to create SchoolQuest.

"The greatest thing to do when you have a need is to do something about it," said Schwartz, who credits volunteers who give their time, money, resources and dedication to help MCEC succeed. "We felt the need. The kids talked to us and said, 'We just don't have one source where we can go to. We started to print programs and information material, but it didn't do it. It wasn't comprehensive enough. It wasn't flexible enough to change when changes took place. Now we've built it into the Web, where we can change the information. We have dedicated people keeping it up to date.'"

Mary Keller, MCEC's executive director, introduced high school student Jennifer Brenke, 17, and Loretta Cremin, the mother of four military children, to tell the audience about their experiences with SchoolQuest. Keller noted that Brenke is a participant in MCEC's "Student 2 Student" program and is a special student in the humanities.

"She can use SchoolQuest for herself, or also as part of the Student 2 Student program, to help other students as they exit one high school and prepare to go to another," Keller noted. She emphasized

that SchoolQuest starts with preschool - "from potty training through high school graduation."

Brenke said when she searched SchoolQuest at MCEC headquarters in Harker Height, Texas, it came up with all four schools in her district that have the humanities courses she needs.

SchoolQuest highlights all the schools in a particular district so parents and students can view every school, every single requirement and all the programs they have, she noted. "So I truly believe in this program because it gives an opportunity to know that the requirements students need to graduate," said Brenke.

Calling high school "the best time of your life," Brenke said SchoolQuest lets student know they have potential and gives them the strength to fulfill their potential and succeed in life. "That's why every parent should know how to use SchoolQuest," she noted.

Pointing out that parents are children's best guidance counselors, Keller said it's complicated to decipher all the information about different schools in different states. "So the parent as the user is the child's best guidance counselor and is also the best one to prevent the turbulence of going from place to place," Keller said.

Cremin shared her perspective, a parent's perspective, of what SchoolQuest means to military families and other highly mobile families.

"We know full well the obstacles, the challenges that befall a military family," said Cremin. "Military families are amazing, because they have this incredible network and an incredible ability to become flexible and to adapt. That's represented in no better place than in

our children.

"Over the years, we've had a word-of-mouth networking system where we exchange ideas and information on how to best suit our children's needs," Cremin continued. "Sometimes that works, but it's always someone else's experience or advice. SchoolQuest is big - a big idea, a big event -because it changes all of that for military families."

Cremin said SchoolQuest is an empowerment. MCEC teaches parents how to become their child's best advocate.

"It's very empowering," she noted. "Now we have this online resource that everyone can use all across the globe to be able to start the transition process early."

"So as soon as we find out we've got orders and sometimes we don't get much notice, we become proactive," Cremin said. "To take control is not only empowering for us, it's empowering for our children because they feel a sense of control and security. Involving them in this process is also exciting."

She said those are some of the best attributes of SchoolQuest. "The main thing is we try to think of it as closing a gap," Cremin noted. She said from the time children are transitioned to the time they're acclimated to a new school and new location, parents want to do their best to close the gap.

"SchoolQuest not only provides us with opportunities, but creates possibilities that we never would have investigated before this wonderful launch," she said. "By working together, parents, military installations and organizations like MCEC can all collaborate for the common goal of helping our children achieve academic success. Military children are very successful in academics as well as in life."

What it takes to be number one



Photo courtesy of Forest City Residential Management

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Allan Tetreault and his family won Yard of the Month honors for June for the Hokulani family housing neighborhood.