

# Viewpoint

## STREET TALK

### What's best about being a military spouse?



**Renee Ashley**  
Family member

"The opportunity to travel and see the world."

"The medical benefits, and getting to see different parts of the United States, and meeting people with different attitudes."

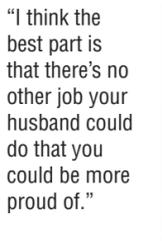


**Melissa Casey**  
Family member



**Desiree Chaves**  
Family member

"The homecoming!"



**Heather Delwisch**  
Family member



that's the best part."

**Erin Dick**  
Family member

"Traveling, and getting medical benefits, and the VA loans for housing really comes in handy."



**Tarrus Elliott**  
Family member

# Family readiness groups need your help

*Editor's note: The following commentary was first run in May 2005, but what it has to say about the role of family readiness groups is as important today as it was then.*

**By Lisa Fayed**  
Family member

Over the years, family readiness groups have taken a "bad rap." They are rumored to be full of gossip and nosy spouses.

While in the past this might have been true in some cases, the Army is determined to provide structure and guidelines, supplying the members with constant training and resources to operate more effectively.

Unfortunately, participation in FRGs has declined while the need for active readiness groups has increased.

Contrary to popular belief, the FRG is not a social wives' group. They don't meet for coffee and socialize at their meetings. Their goal is to support the unit's families by spreading knowledge of programs available to assist the ever-changing military family. While many of our families are miles away from home, the FRG often becomes like family to many.

It helps to build friendships and unity among the unit's Soldiers and their families.

As an FRG leader myself, I can attest that a strong FRG is the backbone of our military families. I am challenged every day to provide our unit's members resources that they might not have known existed — such as the AER food closet, or education programs that are offered to family members.

Military life is sometimes a bumpy

road and the FRG helps to ease families through the rough spots.

With more frequent deployments, FRG participation has become vital. Information related to the unit and its Soldiers is relayed to the FRG leader, who then passes down pertinent information to the group's members.

During a deployment, it is every group's goal to educate spouses on what to expect and to help them through the crises that are bound to happen. This aids spouses in becoming more self-sufficient and confident about handling problems while their husband or wife is deployed.

FRG groups are not all business and no fun. They hold fundraisers to cover the costs of family outings and include single Soldiers, as well. For example, a readiness group here on Fort Lewis planned an event at a local theme park

and raised enough funds for it to be free for anyone in the unit who wanted to attend.

Many FRG meetings are held at local restaurants, creating a more relaxed atmosphere. Some even offer weekly play dates for children, or walking groups for parents. Each group creates its own events and they vary as greatly as the number of units on post.

I urge each of you to participate in your FRG, whether it is as an office holder or as a member.

FRGs are completely voluntary and there are no costs associated with membership. This is your chance for your voice to be heard. In a sense, the FRG is an advocate for the military family. The needs are always changing and it is because of these volunteers that challenges are met with solutions.

## LOOKING BACK



Fort Lewis Military Museum

Soldiers practice their aiming technique on Fort Lewis in 1941. In the buildup of the Armed Forces prior to U.S. entry into World War II, a variety of weapons were used for training.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

MAY 11	MAY 12	MAY 13	MAY 14	MAY 15	MAY 16	MAY 17
<b>1864:</b> BATTLE OF YELLOW TAVERN: J.E.B. STUART IS MORTALLY WOUNDED	<b>1975:</b> U.S. MERCHANT SHIP MAYAGUEZ SEIZED BY CAMBODIAN FORCES	<b>1846:</b> U.S. DECLARES WAR ON MEXICO, TWO MONTHS AFTER FIGHTING BEGINS	<b>1804:</b> LEWIS & CLARK SET OUT FROM ST. LOUIS FOR THE PACIFIC COAST	<b>1942:</b> GASOLINE RATIONING INTRODUCED BY THE U.S.	<b>1864:</b> BATTLE OF BERMUDA HUNDRED, VA.	<b>1987:</b> USS STARK HIT BY IRAQI MISSILES, 37 SAILORS DIE

## CHAPEL SERVICES

### Catholic Masses

Weekdays (except Fridays and holidays), 11:50 a.m. — Main Post Chapel, Building 2001, 967-4849

Weekdays, 11:45 a.m. — Madigan Chapel, MAMC, 968-1120

Saturdays, 4:30 p.m. — Madigan Chapel, MAMC

Saturdays, 5 p.m. — Main Post Chapel

Sundays, 8 a.m. — Main Post Chapel

Sundays, 9 a.m. — Madigan Chapel

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. — Main Post Chapel

Sundays, noon — Evergreen Chapel Building 3238, 967-7186

### Orthodox services

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. — Cascade Chapel, Bldg. T03725, call 967-1717 for dates of services

### Jewish services

Fridays, 7 p.m. — Chapel 5, Building 2270, 967-6590

### Lutheran Liturgical services

Sundays, 9 a.m. — Soldiers Chapel, Building 3799, 967-7151

### Protestant services

Sundays, 11 a.m. — Main Post Chapel

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. — Four Chaplains Memorial Chapel, Building 9120

Sundays, 10 a.m. — Evergreen Chapel

Sundays, 10:30 a.m. — Madigan Chapel

Sundays, 11 a.m. — Soldiers Chapel

Sundays, 11:15 a.m. — Four Chaplains

### Wiccan

Saturdays, 6 p.m. — Building 6195

### LDS

For LDS services information, call Lt. Col. (Ret.) Andy Raymond at 582-8776.

# Tobacco use just a form of slow suicide

**By David W. Kuhns Sr.**  
Northwest Guardian

A lot of young Soldiers are committing slow suicide — they just won't admit it to themselves.

Despite plenty of warnings, tobacco use remains high among Soldiers. When you ask them why, there isn't anything too surprising about what they say.

It is no great revelation that young people start using tobacco to "fit in," or from peer pressure. And that is what Soldiers told us in the past when the Northwest Guardian ran a series about Soldier attitudes toward tobacco use. Especially in combat units, lighting up, sharing a dip, or stuffing a cheek is a social occasion. Part of the bonding that takes place, especially in a combat zone, involves sharing a habit that is deeply ingrained in our image of Soldiers at war.

The tragedy of it all, is that it makes so little sense.

Tobacco users almost universally say they smoke, dip or chew because it relaxes them — especially in times of great stress. But the physiological effects of nicotine are anything but relaxing. The few minutes of mild euphoria are balanced by increased nervousness, less steady hands, poorer coordination and decreased night vision. That's not the sort of trade a thinking, combat Soldier would want to make.

If you ask tobacco users what it would take to get them to quit, the most common response you will receive is "when a doctor tells me to."

That has to be the ultimate irony. The surgeon general (our nation's top, official doctor) has been telling tobacco users their habit was life-threatening for decades. All they have to do is look at the label on the pack, tin or bag.

I know, they are waiting for a more personal diagnosis. But should anyone really want to wait until they are told they have lung cancer before they kick the habit? We once talked to an infantry sergeant first class who described his daughter's fear for his life — but the Soldier didn't attempt to quit dipping until a dentist spotted pre-cancerous abnormalities on his gums.

I met a Soldier once who waited to be told he HAD to quit. Doctors were attempting to rebuild his jaw — they had to remove much of it because of the cancer chewing tobacco caused. He had photographs from his days as a high school baseball player. Good-looking kid. Not any more.

Dying from any form of cancer is pretty unpleasant. Just ask someone who has lost a loved one. It isn't sudden; it isn't painless; it isn't a clean way to go. Living with emphysema or disfigurement isn't easy, either. And the cost!

The average smoker would see almost as big an increase in spending money by kicking the habit as by getting promoted.

Throw in the smell, the dirt, all the other negatives ...

I know, it just doesn't matter, not to the young men, and women who are following their peers into tobacco use. No matter what we say, most of them will wait until they know for sure they have to quit. For many of them it will be too late.

But when you seek that momentary relaxation, that extra bit of fellowship with other users, just try to remember — you're killing yourself. Some ways are just slower than others.



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