



A U.S. Army paratrooper receives German jump wings after a jump over Ft. Bragg, N.C., during Operation Toy Drop. The 10th Annual Randy Oler memorial Operation Toy Drop is hosted by the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) and is a foreign wings exchange and community service operation to support the military and local community by collecting over 1,400 toys for deserving families in the Fayetteville area. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Micky Bazaldua)

Family and Medical Leave Act Extended to 26 Workweeks

According to the U.S. Department of Labor website, a provision of the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which was signed into law by President Bush on January 28 of this year, amends the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) permits the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin to take up to 26 workweeks of leave to care for a "member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness." Normally, eligible employers are permitted 12 weeks of unpaid leave for such family emergencies.

The NDAA also permits an employee to take FMLA leave for "any qualifying exigency (as the Secretary [of Labor] shall, by regulation, determine) arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation." By its express terms, this provision of the NDAA is not effective until the Secretary of Labor issues final regulations defining "any qualifying exigency." DOL is preparing such regulations. In the interim, DOL encourages employers to provide this type of leave to qualifying employees.

DOL will update this page as additional guidance is developed and published. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Labor website at http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/NDAA_fmla.htm.

Briefs

TriWest Donates \$250,000 to TAPS to Help Grieving Military Families

TriWest Healthcare Alliance has donated \$250,000 to the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) to fund nine grief Survivor Seminars for adults and TAPS Good Grief camps for child survivors in the western region of the United States. Programs will be held at key military centers including Camp Pendleton, CA, Fort Carson, CO, Fort Richardson, AL, Fort Lewis, WA, and Fort Bliss, TX. TAPS supports all those who have lost a loved one in the military, regardless of circumstance or geography. All services are provided free of charge to the surviving family. Learn more at <http://www.taps.org>.

Supporting the Cause

Cause (Comfort for America's Uniformed Services) is working hard to address the needs of recuperating service members. Situated near the residential facilities that house soldiers while they are recuperating, Cause supports the service members by offering such services as spa days, picnics, brunches and videogame tournaments and gift packs.

In addition, Cause runs a digital library stocked with a wide range of DVDs, videogames, gaming systems and gaming accessories for the videogame enthusiast.

Cause volunteers include firefighters, police officers, lawyers, sorority sisters, professional athletes, school kids, active duty military and stay-at-home mothers.

If you are interested in donating to the Cause in the form of gift pack items, such as hand-held games or gift cards, or if you are interested in more information, please e-mail Cause at info@cause-usa.org or call (703) 481-8830.

