

Watch this! Command ready to support Shinseki's Army. See page 3.



The Eagle

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Season

celebrating the



Commanding General's Greeting

*From
my family
to yours...*



This century's final holidays are fast approaching and with them, much anticipated joy and happiness; cheerfulness and elation; reflection and sentiment; but also sadness and sorrow over lost loved ones.

Traditions and customs may vary from family to family, from religion to religion, also from nation to nation, but all of us cherish these times of togetherness and relaxation. It is important to remember that, in spite of the current

economic boom, there are many less fortunate souls out there. Our thoughts will be with them and, hopefully, our supportive actions too.

In addition, let us pause to salute the brave men and women in uniform who have answered the call to secure our freedom, maintain our national interests, and defend our sacred liberties.

As we meet with family and friends to celebrate these holidays, there will be increased risks from travel because of road conditions, weather, and fatigue. Drive safely. Don't drive if you

drink. Be good to your body.

Let us all enter the new century sound in mind, body, and spirit, ready to support our command's essential mission, vision, and goals.

I hope you and your family and friends have the most enjoyable and safe holidays ever. May God bless you and may God bless America. Let us continue to strive to "be all we can be" into the next century.

(signed)

*Lt. Gen. John Costello
Commanding General*



Y2K We're ready for you

Lt. Col. Erbin Troutman Huntsville, Ala.

For months, the command has prepared for the new millennium. With all the media coverage, the general public is well aware of the issue. But simply stated, many computers and software applications that translate dates treat the year as a two-digit number, so that "1999" is rendered as "99".

These two-digit fields were a common practice in years past due to storage limitations of older computers. The assumption that the year begins with 19 creates problems in the turn of the century. If while working with 21st Century dates, a computer stores the year as a two-digit number, the date 01-01-00 might likely be interpreted by many software applications as Jan. 1, 1900. Such interpretation errors may affect computer clocks, sorting data by date, determining people's ages, calculating interest on bank accounts, etc.

The resolution approach for SMDC has been strict adherence to the guidelines provided by command leadership, Department of the Army, and the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. All guidance required compliance with the modeled five-phase Y2K process: awareness, assessment, renovation, validation, implementation

Each phase required completing detailed compliance elements. For example, exit criteria included completion of checklists provided by Army and

BMDO, documented strategies and timelines, written test reports and results, etc.

During the awareness phase, SMDC soldiers and employees were told of potential Y2K issues through designated people in their directorates. Memorandums and status updates were provided on a regular basis, and a Y2K information center was included on the command Intranet. In addition, several Y2K-related posters were displayed at various command locations.

After understanding the Y2K problem, each directorate was inventoried against established criteria. The command's working inventory totaled several hundred systems that were diligently tracked through completion of each phase. Of the total number of SMDC systems, less than 10 percent were considered mission-critical by Army standards. However, even though fewer in number, these mission-critical systems (located at Kwajalein and ASPO) commanded far more emphasis than the non-mission critical systems. This added emphasis required participation in numerous Joint StaffCINC level operational evaluations.

All identified SMDC systems were processed through the renovation phase. During this phase, some were migrated to compliant software versions, some were fixed by manually expanding the two-digit date fields to four-digit date fields, and others completed the phase by application of the appropriate software patches. Next, the renovated systems were thoroughly tested during the validation phase. All systems were required to complete both unit and

integration tests.

Written test plans and test reports substantiated both the process and the results. Upon verification that the renovations would serve as complete fixes, the systems transitioned into the implementation phase. At this point, the systems were baselined and placed back into full operational status.

In addition to ensuring Y2K compliance for its many systems, the command has provided Y2K fixes for laptop and desktop PCs, as well as numerous embedded systems.

To further ensure complete readiness, numerous audits were done throughout the command. Internal audit teams, as well as BMDO have conducted these reviews. Auditors have evaluated each phase of the process with special emphasis placed on the review of operational contingency plans at the system-level. The command's fail-safe planning strategies have always included system-level contingency plans and have recently added directorate-level contingency plans. (The purpose for directorate-level contingency plans is to set priorities and detail work-arounds.) As expected, SMDC has consistently scored well in all areas examined.

The command's team is in the process of finalizing transition roll-over plans which are expected to include designation of a core group who will be responsible for review and reporting during the actual year change.

(Troutman is the assistant deputy chief of staff for information management.)

The Eagle ...

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Command is positioned to support Shinseki's vision for the Army

Bloxham says it's not crunch time. It's time to move at the speed of Army business.

by **LuAnne Fantasia**
Huntsville, Ala.

"One hundred years ago, the Army was scattered from Cuba to Puerto Rico to the Philippines. Operating tempo was high, with soldiers maintaining peace, rebuilding nations, handling refugees, even helping disaster relief in the Caribbean after a hurricane. The Army was overseas, and things looked like they were going to stay that way for a while. Does any of this sound familiar? And, what is the condition of the Army today?"

Quoted from the Army Chief of Staff's presentation in October at the annual AUSA meeting, Gen. Eric Shinseki went on to say, "today's Army is stretched and busier today than I can recall in the last 34 years, spread all over the globe...and challenged to provide predictability to its soldiers and their families..."

In response to that, Lt. Gen. John Costello recently told a large group of soldiers and employees in Huntsville, "we've got to have an organization that is agile enough to go where the Army leadership wants the Army to go.

"I think we're ahead of the power curve in terms of where the Chief wants us to go," the commanding general added, "but we're not *that* far ahead. My toughest balancing act is getting money for projects. There is no free money. Sometimes a higher priority project pays the price for the money we do get. We should be focused on project number one, but there's no money for project number one. Instead, we get money for project number 10. That's why the strategic planning process is so important."

Costello said the command is going

to feel some turmoil. "General Shinseki said we—the Army—will man our 10 divisions to 100 percent of authorization by the end of this fiscal year. Where are we going to get the people for that? Current resources.

How? The rest of the TDA Army [fixed units] is just now starting to outsource, according to Bloxham. "SMDC was born that way. Only five percent of our workforce is military. We've already contracted out 3,000 man-years of efforts in Huntsville alone."

the organization that will allow that flow to happen. We represent the user."

He referred to the book, "On War", by Carl Von Clausewitz, which speaks of battlefield fog and friction. "Through our programs such as ASPO's Tactical Exploitation System, or TES, we provide warfighters the information they need, in a timely manner, giving them perfect information and a common view of the battlefield, and that reduces the *battlefield fog and friction* Clausewitz speaks of," Bloxham explained.

Are we unique? Yes.

SMDC is an organization of the future, Bloxham said. The command marched into history two years ago when it became the only major Army command with all the 'space' pieces under one chain of command. "We have all of this in one organization."

- define warfighter requirements in the FDIC [Force Development and Integration Center]

- develop advanced space technology in our Space and Missile Defense Technical Center

- pass these to the Acquisition Center [such as we did with JLENS and ASPO]

- ARSPACE [Army Space Command, Colorado Springs, Colo.] is the user.

In summary, SMDC comes to the Army's playing field of the 21st Century with some heavy artillery. Under Shinseki's leadership, Bloxham said changes are going to be major; they're going to be quick, and they're going to have an impact, "but, we [SMDC] shouldn't feel threatened. We are value-added to the Army's vision of the future. We are *directly* relevant."

"That's what we do and that is how SMDC is related to the Chief's vision of the future."

Col. Garth Bloxham

"When he says two divisions are going to become light armor divisions, where are we going to get those dollars? Current resources," Costello said. "So, we are definitely going to see some changes in this command."

Colonel Garth Bloxham said Shinseki's message is one we need to wake up to. "The Army has already identified over 17 thousand slots out of the TDA Army [fixed units, opposed to deployable units], of which SMDC is a part," he added.

As deputy chief of staff for resource management, Bloxham's playing field includes manpower. He said the command is actively involved in protecting its interests, to the tune of about 100 military slots at risk of being civilianized in order to man the divisions Shinseki wants beefed up.

"We will do well in this process because SMDC is already where the rest of the Army needs to go. We are in a position to support the Chief's vision for the Army," he added.

How do we fit in?

Bloxham said it's not crunch time, as much as it is time to move at the speed of business—Army business.

"General Shinseki said he wants the 'best combination of technologies that will provide survivability...low observable, ballistic protection, deep targeting, early attack and first round kill with smaller caliber solutions.' We are value added to those goals," Bloxham said. "That's what we do and that is how SMDC is related to the Chief's vision of the future."

In DoD, the Army is the biggest user of space products, he pointed out, "and SMDC is the Army's representative [proponent] to the Army-in-Space issues. So, if the Army is going to accomplish *reach back communications and intelligence*, as Shinseki said, it is going to be through Space," Bloxham explained.

He said organizations such as the Air Force and the National Reconnaissance Office must validate their work in Space by defining and ensuring they meet the Army's requirement. "We are

Battalion motto: We control the high ground

1st Satellite Control Battalion: offspring of 126 years of history

by **Ed White**
Colorado Springs, Colo.

In 1873, three soldiers of the US Army Signal Corps' weather service opened the world's highest weather observatory, on the 14,110-foot summit of

Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs.

Working from a hastily built two room stone building with a tin roof held down with rocks, these signal soldiers controlled the ultimate high ground of their day. Sending reports via an 11-mile telegraph line to Colorado Springs, these soldiers found their reports reprinted in newspapers nationwide.

In 1968, 95 years later, the Defense Department decided to place Signal Corps soldiers in control of a new patch of high ground when DoD gave the go-ahead for development of the Defense Satellite Communications System-II program. This time the high ground was in an area known as "Clark's Belt", some 22,300 miles above the earth. The first of these spin-stabilized, four-channel satellites was launched Nov. '71, and the program eventually grew to 12 satellites on orbit. The last of these satellites was maneuvered into supersynchronous orbit December of last year, and the DSCS constellation became 100 percent comprised of three-axis stabilized, six channel, DSCS-III birds. With 14 satellites in the program and 10 currently on orbit, DSCS-III is one of DoD's most successful programs ever.

In the days of the Pike's Peak weather station,

Maj. Gen. Albert Myer, chief of the Signal Corps, trained his weathermen at Fort Whipple, Va., which was later named Fort Myer in his honor. Today's controllers of the high ground receive their intensive training at Fort Gordon, Ga. These satellite controllers receive 51 weeks of training, after which they are eligible for assignment to one of the five DSCS Operations Centers located worldwide.

In 1990, the Army Space Command was given responsibility for the operation and maintenance of these operations centers, and in Nov. '95, ARSPACE established the 1st Satellite Control Battalion to perform this critical mission.

Today the 305 authorized soldiers and civilians of the 1st Satellite Control Battalion ensure all users of the satellites can communicate effectively (network control), and they configure the communications package and ensure the satellites remain healthy (payload control).

It's ironic that today, 126 years after the first signal soldiers climbed Pikes Peak to occupy the ultimate high ground of the time, at the base of that mighty peak signal soldiers of the 1st Satellite Control Battalion continue to serve the Nation.

Patriot hits three for three



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Robin Cousins

PAC-1 missile launched by the Alabama Army National Guard, Elgin Air Force Base, Fla., in mid-October. The PAC-1 successfully intercepted the MQM-107 target.



Soldiers from the Alabama Army National Guard, 1st Battalion, are seen working with the launcher vehicles prior to October's launch.

Alabama has the Patriot unit in

by Connie Davis
Huntsville, Ala.



It's a tradition for Air Defense Artillery for soldiers, when firing their first missile, to place their hats behind the missile before it's launched. The soldiers then recover the remains of their hats as

souvenirs of their first missile test.

In mid-October, approximately 12 *dirty dozen* military hats were blown to bits during two days of missile testing, when the Patriot battalion of the Alabama Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Patriot Project Office, Program Executive Office for Air and Missile Defense, had three successful and essential live Patriot missile firings at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The Patriot battalion is the 1st of the 203rd Air Defense Artillery, Athens, Ala.

Army Colonel (promotable) John Urias is commander of the PEO, here. "As an Army, we continually emphasize the importance of the Reserve Component and National Guard in achieving a single integrated force," Urias said. "[These] successful firings help demonstrate the ability of this Patriot battalion to perform its combat mission as part of the Total Army Team. It's a privilege to serve with these professionals."

"We validated that fielding Patriot to the National Guard is a doable thing," said Lt. Col. Gary Sheffer, battalion commander of the 1/203rd. "Our troops

showed way they proved the system."

Three missile of PAC-1 m MQM-107 graded v successful

The objective 107, but surveillance gain value missile.

"[This] ing of be "You do first time out the p so you d he said.

Thi fi c Brian SH National collect fi gains real day be d the Patri



Photo by Connie Davis

Spc. Joseph White, 1/203rd Air Defense Artillery, tracks threat targets on the Patriot radar in the Engagement Control Station.



Photo by Connie Davis

on, 203rd Air Defense Artillery (Patriot), reload the Patriot



Photo by Connie Davis

The Army's MQM-107 unmanned aerial target was used in the Patriot missile tests.

the only deployable Army National Guard

their professionalism while here, and the
y overcame the range and system problems
that they are technically proficient on the

Patriot missiles were fired as part of this
defense test. The first missile fired was a
missile, which successfully intercepted the
MQM-107 target. The second missile fired, an up-
version of the PAC-1—the PAC-2—missile,
fully intercepted the MQM-107 drone.

Last missile fired was another PAC-1. The
e of this last test was not to hit the MQM-
it provided the Army with valuable field
nce data and allowed the Guard soldiers to
uable field experience training with a live

s successful firing] gives our troops the feel-
ing part of the total force," Sheffer said.
n't want a soldier to arm a missile for the
under the stress of a combat situation with-
proper training. Simulators work every time,
on't get real life stress out of a simulator,"

is was the Alabama Army National Guard's
first opportunity to conduct a live fire exer-
ise, according to the Patriot's test manager,
Sheehy. "The Patriot project office and the
Guard both reap benefits from this test. We
firing data on field missiles and the Guard
experience for the soldiers who might some-
employed to conflict or war and will operate
ot system," Sheehy said.

The Army has asked the Alabama Army National Guard to provide the first full battery to Southern Watch in Southwest Asia, with the first unit scheduled to deploy in 2001, according to Sheffer. The unit—currently the only deployable Patriot unit in the National Guard—will provide tactical ballistic missile defense to Central Command while in Southwest Asia.

Jerry Blaine, Patriot test and evaluation manager, said that until now, Patriot testing has been done almost exclusively at Fort Bliss, Texas, and White Sands Missile Range, N.M. However, the system is expected to perform anywhere in the world.

"Eglin Air Force Base provides a different test environment that builds our confidence in the system to perform its role of protecting our troops and those of our allies in time of conflict," Blaine said.

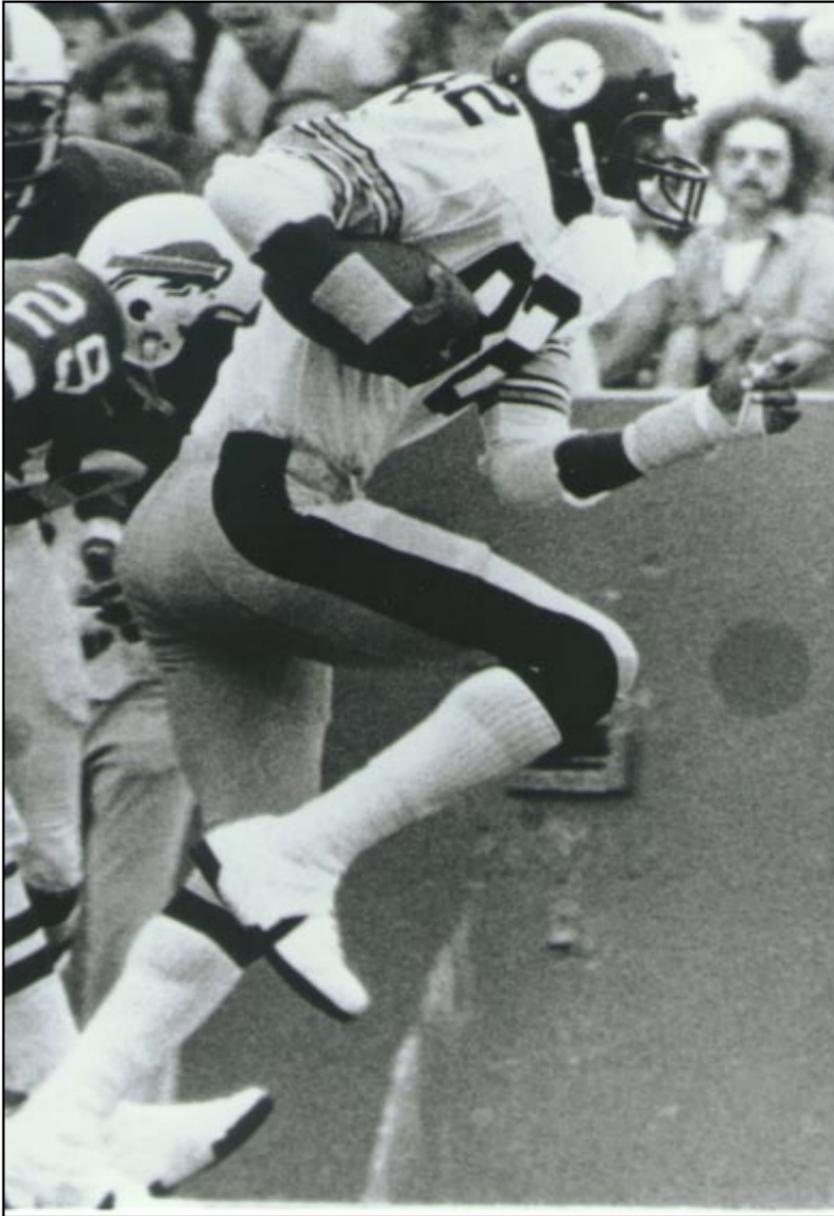
"We are planning future testing here with the National Guard and expect this will become an ongoing part of our overall test and evaluation program."

The importance of the targets used in missile defense testing is often understated, according to Warrant Officer Robert Jeffreys. "Without the appropriate targets, the weapon system would not be adequately stressed to determine the reliability of the missile manufacturing process. The target used [for these tests] was developed to reduce the cost of firing live missiles," he added.

The Simulation, Training and Instrumentation Command, Orlando, Fla., manages the targets used in these tests. Because the three missiles fired are part of 18 mandatory annual Patriot missile firings, no extra costs were incurred.

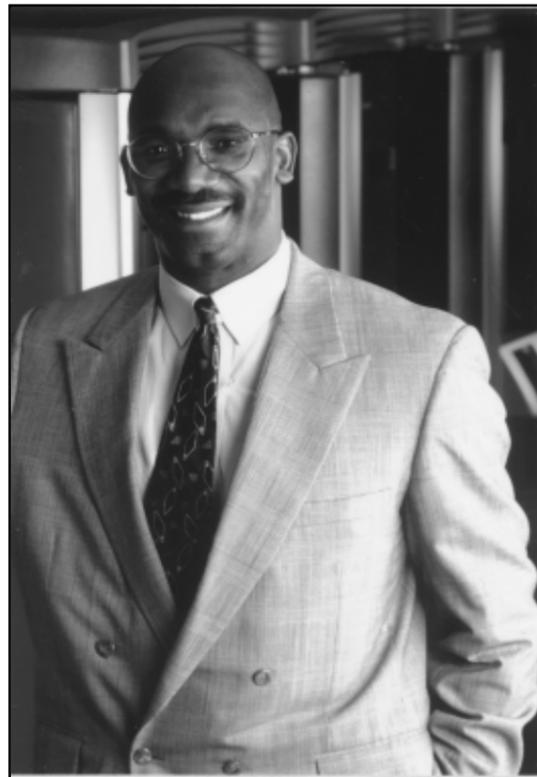


then Now



(Courtesy photo)

John Stallworth, wide receiver for the Pittsburgh Steelers (No. 82), gains yardage after a reception during a 1976-78 season game against the Buffalo Bills.



(Courtesy photo)

John Stallworth, chief executive officer, Madison Research Corporation, attributes his success in life to a hard work ethic and faith in God.

by Marco Morales
Huntsville, Ala.



William Shakespeare said, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em."

In John Stallworth's life, most people would agree he has certainly achieved greatness. Stallworth, chief executive officer of the Madison Research Corporation, here, since 1986, earned four Super Bowl rings while playing professional football with the Pittsburgh Steelers from 1974 through 1987.

The Madison Research Corporation, or MRC, has more than 300 employees located at 11 sites in the United States. It runs the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command's Simulation Center through a multi-million dollar contract.

The SimCenter provides support to the command and other DoD organizations in supercomputing computation, data storage, workstations, and networking for research and development of defensive missile systems.

According to a recent article in *The Huntsville Times*, MRC has been named one of the nation's top 25 small, minority-owned information technology companies by *Washington Technology Magazine*.

Stallworth, a native Alabamian, was born into humble beginnings in Tuscaloosa in 1952. And, although

educational opportunities were financially out-of-reach for his family, he earned an athletic scholarship upon graduating from high school. He came to Huntsville in 1970 to attend Alabama A&M University.

The mentors in Stallworth's life have come from many sides. "It's almost impossible to name just one mentor in

Achieving great things through athletics, work ethic, and mentors

my life," he said. "My mother and father were very influential from the standpoint of establishing a work ethic. They led by example." Both his parents have passed away within the past five years.

Stallworth earned his bachelor's degree in business administration in 1974. While attending school during the Steelers' off-seasons, he returned to Alabama A&M to pursue a master's degree in business administration, which he earned in 1987.

"Coaches I've had both at the college and professional level have been strong mentors in my life," Stallworth said.

"The presence of God certainly adds perspective to my success in life." And he has combined the ingredients of hard work and faith in God to his success in professional football and the business world.

As of the date he left pro football, Stallworth still leads the National Football League as the 14th all-time wide receiver. In four Super Bowl appearances, he achieved 24.4 yards out of 11 receptions for a total 268 yards and three touchdowns. And he managed to play 14 years without major injuries, although there were a couple of stumbling blocks.

"There were two years that I didn't play as a result of injuries while I was with the Steelers."

In 1978 the Steelers made history after a league-best 14-2 regular season and playoff wins versus Denver (33-10) and Houston (34-5).

Their 35-31 Super Bowl XIII win versus Dallas made the Steelers the first team to win three Super Bowls.

In 1979, the Steelers defeated the Los Angeles Rams, 31-19, in Super Bowl XIV to make them the first team in history to win four Super Bowls and the only team to win back-to-back Super Bowls twice. During these Super Bowl appearances, Stallworth played with NFL Hall of Fame members Terry Bradshaw, Mel Blount, Jack Lambert, Joe Greene, Jack Ham, and Franco Harris, who were all led by Coach Chuck Noll, also a member of the Hall of Fame.

Stallworth says he reflects on his past

and how he can now mentor disadvantaged children.

"Since I wasn't exposed to professional athletes who could've offered me advice on pursuing an athletic scholarship when I was in grade school, I believe people like me, who have also been successful in other areas in life, have something to offer children in elementary, middle and high school," Stallworth said, referring to his many public speaking engagements throughout Alabama and the southeast. "We offer scholarships through MRC to a wide variety of students," he said. "Last year we awarded four one-thousand dollar scholarships to schools in the southeastern U.S."

Stallworth is also a member of the 100 Black Men of America, Inc., a national alliance of leading African-American men of business, industry, public affairs and government, who devote their combined skills and resources to confronting the challenges facing African American youth.

Founded in 1963, some distinguished members are Earl Graves, publisher and CEO of Black Enterprise magazine; Andrew Young, former ambassador; Colin Powell, retired U.S. Army general; and actor Bill Cosby.

"I think that most importantly, you have to know who you are," Stallworth said, referring to one of the aspects of being successful. "If you operate pretentiously, that trait will eventually come back to haunt you in the business world. You have to know about and practice honesty, integrity and respect to succeed in life."



With the essential high chair in the background, and curious and energetic kids in the foreground, Terrie Jo Russell is settling into the “Mom” mode quickly. Her children, Sarah and Michael, are both adopted from Russia, and this is the first Christmas together as a family.

The *Terrie Jo Russell* family celebrates first **holiday season** together

by **Carla Smith**
Huntsville, Ala.



A traditional mother of two, she is not. Terrie Jo Russell is the new mom of two children who arrived approximately two months apart.

Russell, an engineer in the command's Space and Missile Defense Battle Lab, wanted to have a family with children. Being a twin herself—she has a twin brother—and the oldest of nine children, she wanted to experience the paternal attachment that goes with being a mother.

“I always wanted a traditional family,” Russell said. “However, when I turned 38 and found myself single, I decided maybe I didn’t need a husband to be a mother; that if I should be lucky enough to find the right person, he could always join the family I have.”

With that, she started researching ways to make her dream come true.

Russell began her search on the Internet, where she located an organization that helps place Russian children in U.S. families. “This organization hooked me up with a Russian adoption agency, that set the adoption up, provided me with a translator, arranged my court dates, and provided me with a driver to make my trip over to Siberia a bit easier,” she said.

“First, I received videos in the mail, which allowed me to see the children,” Russell said. She was also given a short biography on each child.

“I thought I would have a difficult time choosing a child, but my choice was narrowed because I decided to adopt two children close in age so they could always enjoy the camaraderie I felt with my twin brother. I always believed that a close bond exists between children who are close in age,” she said. She selected a little girl first.

“I saw the most beautiful little girl with big brown eyes, and perfect olive skin, and I knew she was the child for me,” Russell recalled. The child was 12 months old at the time and was available for adop-

tion. The agency notified Russell that the little girl she had selected would be moved to an orphanage when she reached 13 months.

“When the agency told me that I would need to come to Russia immediately or risk losing the chance to adopt the little girl, I decided to make the trip in August, which was two months earlier than originally planned.” Russell said softly, “I wanted to avoid the trauma of the child moving from the hospital where she had lived for a year, to an orphanage where she would live for two months, to the United States with me.” With all that in mind, she immediately left for Russia to pick up her first child.

As her heart’s dream sent her to the land unknown, Russell was very pleased when she arrived in Tomsk, Siberia. She was welcomed into the home of the director of Neurology from the hospital where her little girl was born.

“My host family introduced me to the life style of a Russian family, how the people live, the economic situation of much of the country, and some regional history and pictures that I could share with my little girl as she grew older,” Russell said. “I shared a common bond with the husband of my host family. He is an engineer, but it was his wife, the Neurologist, who helped me understand the situation of the families in Tomsk.” Many families live on \$10 a month, and often live in large groups so the cost of living could be shared, Russell explained. “My host family opened their home to me and provided lots of Russian hospitality, meals, and entertainment.”

“I had only been with my daughter eight weeks when it was time for me to go pick up the child I would adopt next,” Russell said. This trip was to Ulyanovsk, approximately four hours from Moscow. “I was looking forward to living in the orphanage with children and having the chance to intermingle with them in everyday life,” Russell said. The orphanage placed the children in family units, where they had house-mothers who came in to work with the children. This served as the child’s family unit and the children were allowed to bond as a family, Russell said.

“I slept in the common area of the cottage, which gave me the opportunity to play and bond with the

child I would eventually adopt.”

As Russell was narrowing her choice, she soon realized that she would not be going home with a toddler. Instead, her heart had been stolen by a seven-year-old little boy, who loved to play soccer. Russell said she asked the child if he’d like to play a game of *kick-the-berry*. “The kids only had one ball and they took turns playing with it, so while some children played with the ball, others would kick berries to each other as if they were little soccer balls,” she explained.

She was having a wonderful time with her soon-to-be son when she realized this little boy was the child for her.

“I could hardly wait for the interpreter to arrive at the cottage the next morning.” As soon as he walked through the doors, she anxiously said to him, “Let’s go ask [the little boy] if he would like to be my son.” As the interpreter relayed the message to the child, they all waited for his response. Suddenly, the child ran to Russell and hugged her with arms filled with love.

“At that moment, with my soon-to-be son’s arms around me so tight, I knew I had made the right choice.” As the hug so quickly cemented her heart with love for her new son, he looked up at her with tears of joy, and replied, “Yes, yes, yes.”

Russell is now the proud new parent of a wonderful 17-month-old daughter and a 7-year-old son. “It’s wonderful to say to my co-workers that I have to go pick up my children. My son and I have lots of second grade homework to complete,” she said laughing. Russell loved spending her first Thanksgiving with the entire family—her parents, brothers, sisters and especially her children. “And Christmas will be like none other this year at our home,” she said.

“Special thanks to management for allowing me the time I need to adjust to my new family and all of my parental responsibilities,” Russell said. “Your kindness and support has made the transition much easier.” She sends a special thanks to Larry Burger, the Battle Lab’s director.

(The author is a personnel specialist in the command.)

I learned the meaning of Christmas in the fifth grade

by LuAnne Fantasia
Huntsville, Ala.

I remember very little of high school algebra or geometry, and I never got the hang of that rope-climbing thing in gym class. What was the point of that anyway?

I do remember a valuable lesson I learned in the fifth grade. That was the year I wished the oily, hardwood floor in my classroom would open up and take me alive. It didn't.

During our class party on the last day of school before Christmas break, as classmates sat all around with unwrapped Slinkies, scrap-books, Tonka trucks and Old Maid cards, I sat without a gift.

I was the new kid in class and too shy to speak up. Silently, I prayed for a medical emergency...or anything to get me out of that room. But prissy Betty picked that moment to acknowledge my existence and spoke up in her delicate little voice, "Mrs. Roberts, LuAnne didn't get a present."

Our teacher's voice was almost as big as her backside. She boomed across the class, "LuAnne, did you draw names?"

"Yes ma'am." (But I'll drop out

of school before I ever do it again).

"Who drew LuAnne's name?" she boomed again.

The class fell silent and all eyes were on me. My face burned. (*This is not good.*)

In the back of the room, Ella raised her hand. Not that any of us little rural children had any money, but Ella probably had the least of all. She wore the same dress every day. It was red with black squares on it. I'll never forget that dress. In my three short weeks there, I had never heard Ella speak.

Mrs. Roberts boomed across the room at Ella. "Well, did you get her anything?"

"Yes ma'am."

"What does it look like?" she snapped at Ella, as she waddled back to the closet where the gifts had been stored.

"It's red," Ella whispered, looking down at the oily, hardwood floor.

Mrs. Roberts found my present on the top shelf. It was tiny and was wrapped in red tissue paper—no bow, no tag, no claim to ownership.

Prissy Betty sat across from me holding this *giant* doll with blond curls, which had to cost a lot more than the two-dollar limit. I meekly pulled my gift from its humble wrapping. It was a

10-cent bubble pipe, and I was paralyzed.

For the longest minute of my life, nobody said anything. But, just in case everyone couldn't see, Pam announced, "It's a bubble pipe!", and prissy Betty snipped, "What are you going to do with *that*?"

(*Sticking it up your nose sounds like a good idea.*) I just sat there looking at the thing until some of the kids lost interest and started doing something besides stare at me. When I could move from the waist up again, I turned to look at Ella, who was still looking at the floor.

Somehow I got my legs to work and made my way down the aisle to her. When I stood beside her desk, still unsure of what to say, she looked up at me.

"I'm sorry," she said.

She understood my embarrassment and hoped I understood hers. She

apologized for things children are not responsible for, but are still ashamed.

"It's okay," I lied.

I recently finished reading *Tuesdays with Morrie*; a warm and wise little book about unembarrassed love. Morrie Schwartz says in the book, "Love is when you are as concerned about someone else's situation as you are about your own." He's right. And, Ella taught me that kind of love in the fifth grade.

I was pleased with my new sense of maturity...and, after I *accidentally* knocked prissy Betty's doll over on the oily, hardwood floor, I felt like a new person.



No more mandatory joy. more holiday blues.

by Dr. Dennis K. McCormack
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What makes the holiday season such a stressful time for many people?

All of us have most likely experienced the holiday blues at one time or another. Do you sometimes wonder what is wrong with you because you don't feel as happy as others look? ... yearned for the simpler, happier times of past years?

Maybe you have experienced these feelings or others when confronted with a particular day or special time of the year. These all fall under the general rubric of the holiday blues, and suffice to say that all of us have encountered at least some of these feelings at one time or another.

To alleviate some of the stress and tension associated with the holiday blues, we can start by understanding that we cannot avoid all stress, nor would we want to.

Some stress is beneficial for us to lead happy and productive lives. Other forms of stress, however, if not dealt with, can cause both physical and emotional problems.

The secret of coping more effectively with stress, no matter what the cause, is learning how to react

more positively to that which causes us concern.

Specifically this might include the following:

— **Develop realistic expectations of what would make you happy.** You don't have to accomplish everything all at once. Take one day and one project at a time.

— **Don't procrastinate.** Set up shopping lists early, allowing enough shopping time so that there is no need to rush.

— **Don't overindulge.** Don't push yourself too hard physically. The more exhausted we become the greater our chances of succumbing to errors of judgment. We must also be careful about drinking excessively. Remember, alcohol is a depressive. If we are drinking because we are depressed, all we are doing is adding to our depression.

— **Be positive.** The more positive we are, the better position we are in to cope more effectively. Our self-image is enhanced and we attain a comfortable self-confidence. We are less vulnerable.

— **Learn to relax.** We cannot be stressed and relaxed at the same time. Therefore, to substitute a relaxed state for stress will enable us to experience less tension. Search out those activities that are relaxing to you.

— **Develop a good physical exercise program.** There are both physiological and psychological

benefits derived from exercise, both combining to give us a greater sense of control over ourselves.

— **Become involved.** Don't wait for things to happen. Share yourself in meaningful ways.

In general, it is not so much the stress that is the problem, but rather our perception and reaction to it, which causes us trouble. When confronting stress, we need to recognize the things we can change, and the things we have to accept.

We must recognize that we are most capable of positive thoughts and actions, and that we have the ability to achieve true inner peace, and that we possess the desire to share this peace with others.

Remember, the greatest gift we can give is to be genuine in our caring and concern for another. It is not the materialistic things of life that carry the most significance, but rather the feelings we carry in our hearts. These feelings cannot be purchased; they can only be given away. Christmas, like any holiday, can be a happy experience if we want it to be.

(The author is a family therapist at Winn Army Community Hospital.)