

SitRep

YOUR WORLD THIS WEEK

www.airforcetimes.com

[HERE'S WHY]

Gold Star mothers are women who have had a child killed in the line of duty.

Why does a gold star symbolize a lost loved one?

During World War I, some families hung a banner with a star in their windows to show their devotion to the nation.

A blue star represented a son in the military and a gold star signified a son who had been killed in action.

Mothers of fallen soldiers eventually came to be known as "gold star mothers," according to American Gold Star Mothers Inc., a nonprofit support group formed in 1928 by and for the women whose children made the ultimate sacrifice.

There's even a day set aside for Gold Star mothers — the fourth Sunday of September.



[TRUESTORY]

If you feel the urge to call home from the war zone to propose to your girlfriend, be sure to double-check the number before you dial.

The Daily Mail reports that a young British soldier in Afghanistan tried to pop the question via telephone but got an answering machine. So he left a phone message — for a 44-year-old mother of three named Diane Potts.

The right woman might not get the soldier's proposal for a while. According to Potts, the soldier said in his message that "he would not be able to ring for another month, and would not be home for another three months."



MARCIA STAIMER/STAFF

[ONLINE MULTIMEDIA]

The F-35B Joint Strike Fighter completes a picture-perfect vertical landing at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md.

militarytimes.com/multimedia

Video keyword search: **vertical, landing**



[FIVETHINGS]

EVERY AIRMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Virtual PTSD help

Suspect you might be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder? There's a new way to check your symptoms from the privacy of your home computer.

A Defense Department team at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., has created a 3-D virtual world to help users learn more about what PTSD is, what the symptoms are and how to get help.

The T2 Virtual PTSD Experience lets you use an avatar in Second Life to anonymously explore a series of locations with information on the disorder. The National Center for Telehealth and Technology launched the free online tool last month.

Here's what you need to know about the virtual project:

1 Signing on. Accessing the T2 Virtual PTSD Experience is easy. Visit the project's website, <http://t2health.org/vwproj/>, and follow the detailed instructions for setting up a Second Life account and accessing the virtual world.

Once you're in the T2 Virtual PTSD Experience, you can explore different locations with features such as PTSD self-screening, videos on the disorder and information on how to get professional care.

2 Going digital. The team chose a digital platform to reach out to service members for a number of reasons, said Kevin Holloway, government lead for the project's development team.

It helps engage younger service members who are more familiar with technology such as Second Life, Holloway said. A free, online system also creates a convenient way for service members to get help when they might not otherwise.

"I'm a clinical psychologist, so I treat a lot of patients for PTSD," Holloway said, "and I see so many service members and veterans who suffer for years needlessly with symptoms of PTSD because they don't know where to get resources or because of a perceived stigma."

3 Not a substitute. Although the center hopes that the tool will help PTSD sufferers and their loved ones, Holloway emphasized that the virtual world can't provide professional-level care.

"This is not therapy," he said. "This space is simply educational in nature. This is not a substitute for a therapist; it's not a substitute for an actual assessment from a medical provider."

4 Other uses. The National Center for Telehealth and Technology hopes to expand the uses of their Second Life world, Holloway said. The center is now working on developing similar spaces for other psychological health needs, such as depression, substance abuse and traumatic brain injury.

5 Another option. The center created another digital tool that could help with post-traumatic stress. A free Android app released in November helps users track their moods from day to day. That information can be used for self-help or to share with a therapist as a good record of emotions.

The app is called the T2 Mood Tracker Application and is available through Android's apps store.

— Jill Laster



NATIONAL CENTER FOR TELEHEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY

The T2 Virtual PTSD Experience uses a variety of locations in Second Life to educate users about post-traumatic stress disorder, including symptoms and ways to get help.

[NEWSMAKER]

'It is a fair, equitable and competitive process to remain in the Air Force.'

Name: Brig. Gen. Sharon Dunbar **Position:** Air Force director of force management policy on retention boards that will be used to separate as many as 2,000 officers involuntarily. **Page 22**



[BYTHE NUMBERS]

A look inside this issue.

\$658.17

What the annual cost for Tricare Prime family coverage would have been in 2010 if the \$460 enrollment fee — frozen since 1995 — had kept pace with overall inflation. **Page 10**

57

Number of patterns the Army tested before settling last year on MultiCam, which is replacing both the airman battle system-ground uniform and airman battle uniform for airmen deployed to Afghanistan. **Page 16**

2

Muslim chaplains currently in the Air Force. The service has about 465 active-duty chaplains representing five major faith groups. **Page 18**



10,500

Number of airmen who could go before retention boards this year as the Air Force tries to cut its force. **Page 22**

50

States George Lutz has visited to promote the display of his flag, a tribute to those who died while serving in the military. Lutz is the father of an Army corporal killed in Iraq in 2005. **OFF Duty Page 3**



[ROLLCALL]

Vol. 71, No. 31 (ISSN 0002-2403)

Opening Shots	4
Frontlines	6
Washington	8
Fast Track	14
Your Air Force	16
From Military Times	26
For The Record	28
The Human Toll	28
Parting Shot	30
Crossword	OFF Duty, 14

COVER DESIGN BY JOHN HARMAN/STAFF

Published weekly by Garnett Government Media Corp., 6600 Commercial Drive, Springfield, VA 22159. Annual subscription rate is \$55 U.S. domestic mail. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, Va., and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Air Force Times, Circulation, Springfield, VA 22159-0028. **Customer Service:** (703) 750-7400 or (800) 368-5718. Fax: (703) 658-8314. E-mail: cust-svc@militarytimes.com.