

Celebration honors blacks

By presidential proclamation, Americans officially commemorate National African American History Month.

During National African American History Month, we celebrate the rich legacy of African Americans and honor the remarkable contributions they have made to perfecting our union. This year's theme is "Black Women in American Culture and History."

In this year's proclamation, President Barack Obama states that the theme "invites us to pay special tribute to the role African American women have played in shaping the character of our nation — often in the face of both racial and gender discrimination. As courageous visionaries who led the fight to end slavery and tenacious activists who fought to expand basic civil rights to all Americans, African American women have long served as champions of social and political change. From the literary giants who gave voice to their com-



Did you know?

By Col. Paul Hossenlopp
Fort Sill Garrison commander

munities, to the artists whose harmonies and brush strokes captured hardships and aspirations, African American women have forever enriched our cultural heritage. Today, we stand on the shoulders of countless African American women who shattered glass ceilings and advanced our common goals. In recognition of their legacy, let us honor their heroic and historic acts for years to come."

Fort Sill strives to uphold the president's sentiment to pay special tribute to National African American History Month by hosting an annual luncheon. This year's luncheon is today from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Patriot Club. For those who have tickets, Fort Sill civil ser-

vants who attend are not charged leave.

While Black History Month has always been a time to give witness to the achievements of African-Americans, salute African-American heroes, and commemorate African-Americans' historical fight for civil rights, it is also a time for Americans of all races to share in the celebration and appreciate the struggle, which has made the nation a better place to live.

From the joyous to the tragic; from soul food to sports legends and scholars; from the melodies of worship to the agonies of violent discrimination; from slavery to the White House, the story of blacks in America is part of our nation's mosaic and worthy of our attention.



Rich Landry, individual equipment designer with the Load Carriage Prototype Lab, Product Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment, Natick Soldier Systems Center, displays the new Individual First Aid Kit being developed there.

New first aid kit in development

By Bob Reinert
USAG-Natick Public Affairs

NATICK, Mass. — Maybe it looks like a camouflage money belt on steroids, but it could save Soldiers' lives.

The new Individual First Aid Kit, or IFAK, being developed at the Natick Soldier Systems Center eventually will be carried by every Soldier in a combat environment.

"We designed it literally about three or four months ago," said Rich Landry, individual equipment designer with the Load Carriage Prototype Lab, Product Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment, at NSSC. "The medical community said, 'Awesome idea. Let's move out with it.' Overwhelmingly, they thought this was a huge improvement over the current IFAK."

As Landry pointed out, the current IFAK, developed rapidly in the early days of

Operation Iraqi Freedom to fulfill a critical need, has proved rather unwieldy.

"This thing is just kind of a brick on your side that gets in the way of everything," said Landry of the current bulky IFAK, which was built into an existing Squad Automatic Weapon ammo pouch. "It was very, very quick, because they needed them right away."

More thought has gone into the new IFAK, a streamlined, two-piece system that features a pouch with an insert that slides out to allow easy access to medical equipment from either side.

"It supports all the critical items to the individual Soldier's medical needs," Landry said. "The beauty of this system, compared to the old one, is that it allows the Soldier to place it on (his or her) body in a spot where it can be easily accessible, which is the critical piece, but also not get in the way of

other important tactical pieces of equipment."

Landry said 30 new IFAKs recently underwent evaluation at Fort Polk, La., where a platoon of Soldiers carried them through a training rotation. The early feedback has been positive, he added.

"We're very sure this is the direction the Individual First Aid Kit is going to go, hopefully, for all services, but you never know," Landry said. "That would be icing on the cake."

The new IFAK carries even more medical gear than the first version, including two Combat Application Tourniquets. Still, its lower profile allows a Soldier to wear it comfortably in the small of his or her back under the Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment, or MOLLE, Large or Medium backpack.

"And that's critical for us, because the big picture in

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Briefs

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Green-to-Gold Scholarships

The Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps Green-to-Gold Hip Pocket

Scholarship program seeks nominations for the 2012-2013 school year. The program consists of two-, three- and four-year scholarships. Ideal candidates are enlisted Soldiers who display the scholar, athlete, leader attributes and qualities the Army looks for in its officer

corps. Fort Sill can nominate up to two Soldiers for the program by March 16. Interested Soldiers should work through their brigade channels for the application and nomination procedures. For more information call 442-3085 or 442-3785.

Fort Sill museums

The Fort Sill National Historic Landmark Museum is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed Sundays. For more information, call 442-5123. The Field Artillery Museum is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 442-1819 for more information.



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