

Supervisors should recognize civilian employees

Did you know ... the Fort Sill Garrison has a program to recognize civilian employees for their service to the Fort Sill military community on a quarterly and annual basis.

There are three competitive categories: The two individual categories are Category I, for GS-8 and below, and Category II for GS-9 through GS-13.

Category III is for recognizing the best team.

Each directorate and command staff office submits nominations for the quarter and the year in each category to the Directorate of Human Resources.

Judging

A panel comprised of senior leaders from the garrison meets quarterly to review each nomination. Once determined, the panel's recommendations are forwarded to the garrison commander for approval.



Did you know?

By Col. Raymond Lacey
Fort Sill Garrison commander

Winners receive a special act awards, certificates of appreciation and time off awards. The garrison recognizes the winners twice a year at our garrison awards and recognition ceremony.

During those ceremonies, I take the opportunity to recognize others who have made significant contribu-

tions to the Fort Sill military community. Another function of this ceremony is to present length of service awards to those civilian employees who have 25 years or more of federal government service. Over the past year, we have recognized more than 260 military and civilian garrison employees for many different accomplishments.

The next civilian quarterly awards ceremony is Aug. 20

at 1:30 p.m. at the Religious Support Operations Center.

To reach me

To send questions or comments to me, please e-mail fsccms@conus.army.mil or you can mail your comments to Commander, USAG-Fort Sill, 462 Hamilton Road, Suite 120, Fort Sill, OK 73503.

Thanks and have a great Fort Sill day.

Paying respect to our flag honors everyone

By James Brabenec

Monday, as many people at Fort Sill honored American servicemembers past and present with a Memorial Day ceremony at the post flag pole, Bill Davis, commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5263 in Lawton asked are we forgetting our heroes who gave their lives so that we may enjoy freedom and liberty in this country.

At first I said no. Who could forget the horrible deeds of 9/11, the loss of thousands of civilians not only from this country but many countries worldwide. Likewise, who could forget the nearly 5,500 servicemembers killed in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

But, later in the day I had a

moment to pause and consider otherwise.

Leaving the post exchange with a quick meal, I had no sooner stepped outside the refreshing, air-conditioned interior when I heard the first notes of retreat echo off surrounding buildings. In that moment it hit me again are we forgetting or remembering those who gave their lives for their country and those who continue to face the powers of oppression and terrorism around the world. As surely as that music was playing for daily retreat, it too played for those servicemembers past and present I just mentioned.

My Air Force training brought me to the position of parade rest as retreat

Commentary

sounded. In the pause between music, I came to attention and placed my right hand over my heart as "To the Color" played. For a brief instant I looked around the parking lot and beheld people young and old standing quietly paying their respects. In some ways Memorial Day is like any other day on a military installation as reveille and retreat sound as reminders of our profession of arms.

Unfortunately, this day was just like other days for even as I found myself standing in the sun-baked concrete square before a cooling oasis, I heard and saw what could have been a

Soldier exclaim "oh no!" and duck back inside to wait for the inconvenience of the ceremony to pass. Of all days to think of self before service, I think Memorial Day has to be about the furthest from that ideal.

The day could have ended there but returning to my work center to file an article for this week's newspaper I came upon hope for the future and what I call the best actions of Soldiers. Twenty basic combat training Soldiers from C Battery, 1st Battalion, 40th Field Artillery stood at attention grasping the enormous 20-by-38-foot American flag between them as they pre-

pared to properly fold it. From private to specialist; male and female; black, white and all colors in between; Soldiers with names like Bird, Cazares, Beasley, Almeida and Carpenter painstakingly primed and smoothed this colossal symbol of all that is good in this country. Step by step the flag was folded. Soldiers no longer holding the flag returned to attention as the lengthy red-and-white striped fabric diminished in size.

As Drill Sergeant (Sgt. 1st Class) Elocious Frazier guided and supervised the folding, the Soldiers reduced the ponderous rectangle to a neat and orderly triangle ready for display the next time a ceremony or

special occasion called for its ascend up the flag pole.

In less than an hour, I saw all that is good about the Army and some that doesn't quite measure up. Who knows what was going through the mind of that young man. Perhaps the ravages of war, the loss of a comrade, maybe just the stress of ordinary life caused a temporary hiccup from how he might normally act. I certainly can't cast the first stone for when I was young I too made bad choices and ducked retreat. Fortunately, with age comes wisdom and an appreciation for the sacrifices servicemembers continue to make on my behalf.

Let's remember the sacrifices of others not just on the special days, but every day.

the Cannoneer

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For news tips and feature items, e-mail cannoneersill@conus.army.mil or contact: Public Affairs Office, the Cannoneer, 455 McNair Ave. Suite 118, Fort Sill, OK 73503-5100, or call (580) 442-5150. Deadline to submit

announcement and other information is close of business Thursday before the following Thursday's issue.

Printed every Thursday as an offset civilian enterprise publication by the Lawton Publishing Co., Inc., a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Government or the Department of the Army under exclusive written contract. Donald S. Bentley and Stephen F. Bentley, co-owners.

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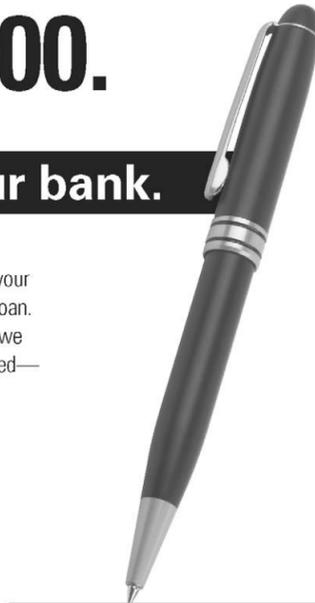
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