

DPH Employee Dedicates Flag to Colleagues

Jim Britton, DPH nurse, stationed in Iraq

By Emily B. Moses, Focus Editor

Jim Britton may not be home in Frankfort for Christmas this year, but he can expect a bit of Kentucky style Christmas to make its way to him in Iraq. While he is gone temporarily, his Department for Public Health colleagues have made sure he is not forgotten.



Britton, 47, of Frankfort, is a member of the United States Army Reserves stationed at Joint Base Balad in Balad, Iraq. He left in late June and is the commanding officer of the only neurosurgical team in Iraq. Britton is a nurse consultant epidemiologist in the Infectious Disease Branch of DPH.

Britton has received care packages from his DPH colleagues every month since his deployment.

“Those girls make sure I am set,” said Britton in a recent interview while he was home on leave. “They have been wonderful. I always appreciate it, and I’m not by myself. It’s very much appreciated by everybody.”

Britton often will take requests from others in his group to see if there is something particular they would like to have. He said he is always happy to share “a little bit of Kentucky” with his fellow soldiers.

“Snacks, goodies, anything I’ve asked for I get from them,” he said. “Not everyone gets packages. I get an abundance of stuff, so I try to make sure other people are covered. It’s not just me. Everybody shares.”

Heading the charge to make sure Britton knows he is not forgotten while he’s gone is DPH employee Tammy Hall.

Hall said there are about 15 people in DPH who contribute monthly to Britton’s packages. Hall said there are several employees who know firsthand what it’s like to have a loved one stationed abroad.

“My son was overseas,” she said. “I know the value of making sure our guys know we appreciate them. We all know. It’s hit more of us, probably, harder than we realize.”

Hall said the DPH group also keeps in touch with Britton regularly via e-mail. It was in an e-mail that Britton told Hall he would be home on leave at the end of November and planned to stop by with a token of appreciation.

Hall said she and other DPH staff were touched when Britton presented the DPH Division of Epidemiology with an American flag that had been flown at half staff over the 332nd Air Force Theater Hospital at Joint Base Balad on Sept. 11, 2009.

“At the hospital you can acquire a flag and they will fly it for you,” said Britton explaining the flag’s significance. “When the governor announced Sept. 11 would be recognized as Patriot’s Day in Kentucky, I thought that would be the best day to do it.”

In addition, Britton had the flag sent on an Air Force mission on Sept. 25 with a friend of his who is a fighter pilot.

A certificate presented with the flag reads “Thank you for your unconditional love and support.”

“We were excited to see Jim during his Thanksgiving furlough and honored that he presented us with the flag and certificate,” said Dr. Kraig Humbaugh, state epidemiologist, who received the flag on behalf of DPH. “The division is very proud of Jim and his commitment to serving our country in Iraq. Our thoughts are with him. We are looking forward to seeing him safely return to us in 2010 from his tour of duty.”

Britton said he had two other flags flown over the hospital to bring home as tokens of appreciation for people who are supporting his efforts and the efforts of other United States soldiers he is working with.

Cabinet Meets KECC Goal

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services received two awards for its Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign (KECC) efforts.

The Cabinet was honored with the Achievement and Key Campaign Awards at the KECC Victory Rally at the end of November. The Achievement Award was given to CHFS for reaching its KECC goal. The Cabinet’s goal was \$200,000. That goal was exceeded as employees raised \$203,577.91. The Key Campaign Award was given to the top three cabinets that raised the most money. The other top two Cabinets were Transportation and Justice and Public Safety.

“We want to thank CHFS for making this year’s KECC a huge success,” said CHFS campaign organizer Mary Spalding. “We couldn’t have met our goal without your compassion and generous contributions.”

Deferred Comp Seminar for New Employees

Kentucky Deferred Compensation is an optional, state-sponsored benefit available to all state employees. Join us for a brief enrollment presentation on Kentucky Deferred Compensation for new employees, and take the action necessary to:

- Learn about the different investment options associated with saving for retirement.
- Discover the best way to save to help meet your retirement goals.
- Enroll in our 401(k), Roth 401(k), 457, Traditional and Roth IRA supplemental retirement saving plans immediately.

The seminar is Dec. 15 from 12:10-12:50 p.m. at 101 Sea Hero Rd., Ste 110, Frankfort. Lunch will be provided. Limited seating, pre-registration is required. To register, call Carol Cummins at (502) 573-7925 or (800) 542-2667. Please call for an enrollment kit if you are unable to attend.

Living Well: Achieve and Maintain your Weight Goals

Already thinking about the New Year? If you are contemplating eating-behavior changes in 2010 or trying to sustain healthy eating, here are some key things to remember to achieve and maintain your goals.

Gain support and encouragement – Find a network of resources and people who will provide you with the necessary tools for success.

Emotional support - Search for people who will listen to you, offer encouragement, share in your frustration, and those you would like to celebrate your success with.

Practical support - Find people to exercise with, grocery shop, swap cooking ideas, and possibly help with child care so you can find time for physical activity. In other words, a group or person you can rely on to help get you through the day-to-day schedule.

Information - Sources for answers on healthy foods, exercising, staying emotionally healthy, guide with general problem solving. For credible information join weight loss groups, hospital weight-management program, online tools, see nutritionists, or pick up reputable books and magazines.

Connect with someone who is also trying to lose weight. Those who are seeking the same goals or maintenance will keep you on track especially when eating out and maintaining a regular physical activity routine.

Realize what you need. Connect the dots and ask people if they are willing to be your support system. If they are willing, discuss your needs and goals so they know how to help you.

If you are located in the Frankfort area and need the help of a group to maintain healthy eating habits, the CHR Weight Watchers meeting is holding an open house Tuesday, Dec. 15, at 11:30 a.m. in the Cafeteria Conference room. For those who are not in the Frankfort area, investigate options offered in your local community.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Sitting at a desk all day can be tough on your body if you use improper posture. Here are some healthy positioning tips for deskwork from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration office.

- Your hands, wrists and forearms should be straight and roughly parallel to the floor.
- Your head should be level or bent slightly forward. It should be in line with your torso.
- Your shoulders should be relaxed while your upper arms hang naturally at your sides.
- Your elbows should be close to the body and bent between 90 and 120 degrees.
- Your feet should be fully supported by a footrest or the floor. Don't sit with your legs crossed.
- Your back should be fully supported with appropriate lumbar support.
- Your thighs and hips should be supported by a well-padded seat and parallel to the floor.
- Your knees should be about the same height as your hips with your feet slightly forward.
- Take frequent stretch breaks and slightly change your position often to avoid joint stress and muscle strain.

Check out the positioning illustrations online at
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/positions.html>