



PRAY FOR OUR DEPLOYED MEMBERS

- Bob Shaut
- Kyle Pleasant
- Michael Wood

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TOGETHER IN SCRIPTURE READING:

This month the book of Proverbs

Yellow Ribbon Ministry Newsletter

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AT THE GATE OF THE YEAR

For many, each new year begins with an optimistic outlook. As the calendar rolls into a new year, we can look back to the last year in our rear view mirror and believe there are endless possibilities for a new start. For some, it is a time to begin a new diet; for others, a time to start an exercise program, new devotional program or just try to start practicing new habits in our lives. Others are able to start separating themselves from painful memories or bad experiences from the previous year. New Year's resolutions are the "catch phrase" for many of these new beginnings.

For others, the new year offers uncertainty, particularly when times are tough or the pundits give us a less than optimistic outlook for the future. I well remember ten years ago when, with much trepidation, we were all entering not only a new decade, but a new millennium. Y2K was that watch word and even with months of preparation, many wondered if computers would work, if our financial system would be crippled or if even the simplest items would be rendered useless. So we all braced for the future as best we could. Some stored up supplies, others withdrew cash from the bank, and some stayed at home fearing the worst. The Y2K

fears soon fizzled, but this past decade had challenges of its own that continues to test our resolve. Terrorism came to our shores on September 11, 2001, and soon after we went to war. We've seen corruption in the public and private sectors that was unfathomable ten years ago. We've seen banks and industry begin to crumble before our eyes. Un-employment and a decreased economy have hit close to home for many as we've seen the stalwarts of our economic dominance falter and our national debt go into the trillions of dollars. For some, this is a fearful backdrop as we begin another decade.

Seventy years ago, at Christmas 1939, England was facing a very fearful and uncertain future as it prepared for a new decade to begin. In September, they had declared war on Germany following the German invasion of Poland. The Battle of Britain was not going well and this tiny Island nation was facing a very tough future at best and a possible German invasion at the worst. King George VI made a Christmas Broadcast to the nation in which he quoted the poem, *At the Gate of the Year* by Minnie Louise Harkins. The poem begins:

I said to the man who stood at the



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gate of the year
 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'
 And he replied, 'Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God
 That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!'

We all stand "At the Gate of the Year" and we go into a new year and a new decade with a combination of optimism and uncertainty. No matter your situation or outlook, we should all go to the Bible to set our course. If you are making "New Year's Resolutions", remember that Proverbs 16:3 tells us to "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be

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SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT (SCRA)

Have you recently been called up for active duty? Are you preparing for a long-term deployment that may affect your ability to meet legal or financial commitments? Or are you nearing the end of your active duty service? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it's particularly important that you understand your rights-and responsibilities-under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) of 2003. This article briefly describes the SCRA, explains how to invoke the law's protections, and tells you where to turn for legal help and more information.

SCRA In Brief

The primary purpose of the SCRA is to ease legal and financial burdens on military personnel and their families brought on by the demands of active duty. In the words of the Act, the provisions were designed to allow servicemembers to "devote their entire energy to the defense needs of the Nation."

SCRA extends relief to all Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy servicemembers on

active duty, including reservists, members of the National Guard and Air National Guard who have been activated for duty, and active-service commissioned officers of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. A number of SCRA provisions also extend to spouses and other dependents, such as protection against eviction and relief related to the termination of residential and motor vehicle leases.

Primary SCRA Provisions

SCRA offers a variety of provisions to help active duty personnel meet their legal and financial obligations. But relief under the SCRA is *not* always automatic. You must affirmatively invoke or request relief. That is why you should familiarize yourself with the law's provisions and work with your nearest [Armed Forces Legal Assistance Office](#) to identify and invoke any SCRA protections that apply to your particular circumstances.

- Some of the more commonly invoked provisions include:

- Six percent cap on interest rates
- Credit rating protection
- Judicial relief
- Ability to terminate property leases
- Cancellation of automobile leases
- Relief from foreclosures and forced sales
- Termination and reinstatement of insurance
- State tax relief

What's New? How the SCRA Differs from the Law It Replaced

SCRA expands the protections provided under the original Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act (SSCRA) of 1940, which was in effect until 2003. Because many of today's servicemembers may be more familiar with the old law, we have highlighted some important changes:

- A break for higher rents
- Interest on credit
- Increased life insurance coverage
- Tax relief for working spouses

For the whole story, go to: www.SaveAndInvest.org

Tricare Reserve Select

Members of the Selected Reserve can buy Tricare coverage when they are in drilling status—not mobilized—provided they meet specific criteria under the program called Tricare Reserve Select.

The program, which offers coverage similar to Tricare Standard and Extra, originally was designed to cover reservists called up in support of contingency operations for more than 30 days. It has since been expanded to all drilling reservists.

Anyone who wants to get into Tricare Reserve Select must agree to serve in the Selected Reserve. For a complete overview go to: www.tricare.mil/mybenefits/home/overview/Plans/ReserveSelect

UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT (USERRA)

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 ([USERRA, 38 U.S.C. § 4301 – 4335](#)) is a federal law intended to ensure that persons who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Reserves, National Guard or other "uniformed services:" (1) are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service; (2) are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; and (3) are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present, or future military service. The federal government is to be a "model employer" under USERRA ([38 U.S.C. § 4301](#)).

"Uniformed services" includes the Armed Forces; the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard when engaged in active duty for training, inactive duty training, or full-time National Guard duty; the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service; and any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or national emergency. For purposes of USERRA coverage only, service as an intermittent disaster response appointee of

the NDMS when federally activated or attending authorized training in support of their Federal mission is deemed "service in the uniformed services," although such appointee is not a member of the "uniformed services" as defined by USERRA.

A requirement of USERRA ([38 U.S.C. 4334](#)) is for employers to "provide to persons entitled to rights and benefits under this chapter a notice of the rights, benefits, and obligations of such persons and such employers under this chapter. The requirement for the provision of notice under this section may be met by the posting of the notice where employers customarily place notices for employees."

ESGR Ombudsman Services Program

The ESGR Ombudsman Services Program was established to provide information, counseling, and mediation on issues related to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). ESGR Ombudsman Services consists of a Customer Service Center to an-

swer phone calls and e-mails involving USERRA questions. Specially trained Ombudsmen are available to assist members of the Guard and Reserve in resolving disputes with their civilian employers related to military service in the Uniformed Services through mediation. ESGR Ombudsmen are volunteers located throughout the US and US Territories.

When a conflict arises, at the request of a servicemember a local ESGR Ombudsman can be assigned to assist in resolving the dispute or conflict through mediation. The ESGR Ombudsman will remain neutral, listen to what the servicemember (employee) and employer have to say and provide them information from USERRA and/or the US Code of Federal Regulations to help guide them in reaching an agreement on how to resolve the issue(s). If an agreement cannot be reached, the Ombudsman will notify the servicemember and employer that the servicemember can file a case with the US Department of Labor/Veterans' Employment and Training Service ([DOL/VETS](#)) or hire a private attorney.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
ESGR Customer Service Center at:
1-800-336-4590
(option 1)

"USERRA is intended to ensure that persons who serve or have served in the Armed Forces are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service."

HERE'S WHY—"TAPS"

For U.S. service members and veterans, there is no more haunting or moving a musical strain than the 24 notes of "Taps."

Ever wonder why these few notes are so much a part of military life?

While the British have had a similar bugle call, "Last Post," for more than 100 years, "Taps" is an all-American tradition dating back to the Civil

War.

While its exact origin is blurred by time and controversy, "Taps" is widely believed to be a revision of "extinguish lights," an Army bugle call that signaled the end of the day.

Brigadier General Daniel Butterfield, a former first sergeant, Medal of Honor recipient and future major general who would serve as chief of staff of the Army of the Poto-

mac, is believed to have penned "Taps" with the help of his unit's bugler while commanding a brigade at Harrison's Landing, Va., during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862.

Butterfield's revision proved so popular that "Taps" soon was adopted by other units, some of them Confederate.



CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

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JANUARY BIRTH-DAYS:

- Therry Johnson—10 Jan
- Ethan Stewart—11 Jan
- Dan Reece—13 Jan
- Chase Vradenburgh—17
- John Powell—19 Jan
- Joel Harris—28 Jan
- Joe Perez—29 Jan

JANUARY ANNI-VERSARIES:

- Chase & Miranda Vradenburgh—1 Jan
- Dan & Becky Reece—3 Jan
- Steve & Deborah Martin—17 Jan

OUR GOALS FOR THIS NEXT YEAR—LET'S ALL PULL TOGETHER IN 2010!!!

YELLOW RIBBON MINISTRY Friendship Baptist Church

Mission Statement

To provide a church centered ministry to military members of Friendship Baptist Church and Friendship Christian School.

Target Audience

Any active, reserve, or retired military member and their immediate family associated with Friendship Baptist Church or Friendship Christian School. Any parent or child of an active or reserve military member is also welcome.

Goals

1. Minister to the unique needs of military families through personal contact, information updates, and periodic meetings.
2. Provide a resource to assist military families during the deployment of a family member.
3. Provide a resource for military families to stay informed of entitled benefits and how to obtain these benefits.
4. Provide an avenue for pastoral staff and school administration to stay informed of needs associated with military members and their families.

To all members: Above you see our stated mission and goals that will continue year after year. In addition, I would like to see us pray regularly for our deployed members and their families this year. I would also like to see our committees start building and developing this year. The Lord has given us a tremendous ministry and opportunity to serve him. I look forward to working with each of you this year!

- Colonel Steve Martin

AT THE GATE OF THE YEAR (continued from page 1)

established." As pundits predict the worst, I can hear the Apostle Paul boldly proclaim, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

I think that the 23rd Psalm best encapsulates how we should enter into times of uncertainty.

"The Lord is my Shepherd (relationship); I shall not want (supply). He maketh me to lie down in green pastures (rest): he leadeth me beside still waters (refreshment). He restoreth my

soul (healing): he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake (guidance with purpose). Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (testing), I will fear no evil (protection): for thou art with me (faithfulness); thy rod and thy staff they comfort me (discipline). Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies (hope): thou annointest my head with oil (consecration); my cup runneth over (abundance). Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life (blessing): and I shall dwell in the

house of the Lord for ever (eternal security)."

Proverbs 3: 5-6 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." As you stand at the Gate of the Year, ready to cross into a new decade, I encourage each of you to put your hand into the hand of God. It is indeed better than light and safer than a known way!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

MARK THE DATE—January 31, 2010

The Yellow Ribbon Ministry will be having our next social on January 31, 2010, following our Sunday morning service. This will be our fourth luncheon, and our others have been a great success. We ask that everyone

who attends bring enough food for your family, plus a few more. This will ensure that we have enough food for everyone, including any visitors who may be in attendance. If you would like to bring your food items with

you as you come to church, we will have the kitchen open for you. Look forward to seeing you on the 31st!

