



LOUISIANA DRUG GUARD

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Basketball court rebounds with activity

No more airballs for Mimosa Elementary students

A worn and mud-covered basketball court bounced back to life through the efforts of the La. National Guard Counter Drug Task Force.

Major Pete Schneider, CDTF Coordinator, could not help but notice no one playing on the six-goal court at Mimosa Elementary in Luling, La. There were no legible markings on the mud-covered court; there were neither rims nor nets to catch balls that had to bounce off the backboard for lack of a better target.

So he did what he knew would improve the quality of recess for the students of the public school. He contacted Mary Lou Sumerall, principal of Mimosa Elementary, and offered to clean and improve the basketball court with the help of members of the task force.

"I was not aware the National Guard did these sort of things, said Sumerall, as she watched the court transform in front of her eyes. "This is pretty spectacular with all these people here, I feel like we struck a pot of gold."

The National Guard is a community base asset; a force dedicated to preserving peace, order and public safety in their community. One motto of the Counter Drug Task Force is "In defense of America's children."

Opportunities that provide children



the access to constructive activities, such as sports, are always positive approaches to keeping them away from drug use.

"Anything that helps kids is good," said Physical Education Instructor, Karen Davis. "I can tell you these kids really need this."

So when more than 20 members of the task force arrived on that cool brisk day, what they discovered were several inches of mud on the court and peeling paint covering the goals.

The first thing they did was power clean everything. Then armed with bright blue paint for the goals and sunny yellow paint for the court markings, the job of taping, marking and painting began.

As the task force neared completion, class by class came out into the yard to watch the courts turn into a bright and inviting arena.

"Before we would just hit the backboard with whatever ball we had," said Betsy Chester, 8. "Now we are going to have basketballs and everything."

One child wondered if the courts were going to stay that way after the task force finished. Joshua Smith, 8, asked, "You mean they are gonna leave all this here for us?"

Screams of delight came from Mrs. Stewart's second grade class, as a hopscotch grid was unveiled near the edge of the court.

"The first thing I am gonna do is hopscotch," exclaimed Anna Dufrene, 8.

The students weren't the only ones expressing their gratitude. Holly Savoie, third grade teacher was amazed that the National Guard does so much for a community. "They are here for us during hurricanes and floods," She said, "Now they are here giving us even more."

Excitement grew as class by class took their turn to express thanks to the court's transformers. They squirmed and screamed trying to get closer and closer to the courts. "I like it," smiled Emily Schneider, 8. "Like it," hollered Timmy Fitzgerald, 7, "I LOVE IT!"

"We had to keep the kids back from the courts because of its condition," said Sumerall. "Now getting them off the courts may be another thing."

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Suzanne Chaillot

Pre-Christmas drug sweep delivers 16 arrests

MONROE (AP) - The officers huddled in the back of a minivan, wearing black or camouflage uniforms topped by Santa Clause hats and antlers.

They, and other officers in nearby vehicles, had to stay hidden until undercover officers made drug buys. Then the vehicles converged, disgorging officers from five area agencies.

Ho, ho, ho - you're busted. It's the Metro Narcotics Task Force's annual pre-Christmas drug sweep.

In less than 24 hours, the officers arrested 16 alleged dealers and hauled them off to the Ouachita Correctional

Center.

The Holiday take down group included officers from the Monroe Metro Narcotics Task Force, the FBI, Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Special Crimes Apprehension Team, The La. National Guard Counter Drug Task Force, Monroe Police Jump Team and the West Monroe Police Street Crime Unit.

Sgt. 1st Class Yolanda Neal, 165th Quartermaster Batalion, supports Rapides Parish Metro Narcotics, Sgt. Reggie Nolan supports Ouachita Parish S/O and Sgt. 1st Class Cary Grant, Co. A 528th, supports Monroe PD.

Drugs taken off highway by criminal patrol units

LAFAYETTE - After a Louisiana State Trooper pulled a 1988 tractor trailer for a traffic violation, he discovered discrepancies in the paperwork.

A careful inspection of the cargo revealed 2,830 pounds of marijuana. The drugs were hidden within a load of limes. The driver claimed he was traveling from Mission Texas to Atlanta Georgia.

In early December a state trooper

conducted a traffic stop on Interstate 10. The registered owner of the vehicle, a resident of McAllen, Texas, was not present.

The driver claimed to be traveling to Atlanta from South Texas. A consensual search of the vehicle revealed 11 pounds of cocaine concealed in the dash.

Staff Sgt. Leo Davis, 415th Military Intelligence Batalion, supports LSP, Narcotics.

Drug Raid nets arrests of family gang

Numerous agencies joined forces and netted 10 members of a suspected drug family in Union and Lincoln parishes.

The arrests followed a year long undercover investigation of the Nation Family gang; described by the US Attorneys Office as a family oriented violent street gang.

The federal charges include conspiracy and distribution of crack cocaine.. The 3rd District U.S. Attorney called the operation the largest drug raid in the parish in recent memory, he described the family as a domestic terrorism organization.

He described their tentacles as reaching into Texas, Arkansas, as

well as Louisiana.

The agencies involved in the arrests were the sheriff's offices from Union, Lincoln and Ouachita Parishes, Rayville, West Monroe, Monroe, Ruston and Famerville Police Departments, Metro Narcotics units, 3rd Judicial District Attorney's Office, FBI, US. Marshals Office, the Louisiana State Police and the Louisiana National Guard Counter Drug Task Force.

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Guard Matters

As a member of the Louisiana National Guard, deployments are always a possibility.

Here are a few tips to be aware of before you get your orders.

*Update DEERS.

*Get new military ID cards for your family if they will expire while you're deployed.

*Establish an emergency fund so your spouse has access to cash.

*Verify the TRICARE status of your family, and if necessary, educate your spouse on the benefits of the military family member dental plan.

*Complete a temporary change of address form and cancel your newspaper deliver if your home will be unoccupied.

*Ensure vehicle registration, insurance and inspection stickers are current.

*In care of rapid deployment notify your financial institutions so changed can be made to banking accounts and insurance policies.

*Designate a beneficiary, create or update your will and submit a power of attorney.

*Establish electronic banking and direct deposit.

*Register on-line so you can conduct business anytime, anywhere.

Check out these web sites that assist deploying troops and their families.

militarycity.com
military.com
defenseink.mil
uso.org
redcross.org
army.mil, af.mil