

## **NEW TRANSFER ORDERS: An Update On the 893<sup>rd</sup>, by Susan M. Ross**

Just after the initial printing of *Deployed* went to press, a core group of reservists from the 893<sup>rd</sup> Army Reserve Military Police Company received new transfer orders. In conjunction with this transfer, they were to ready themselves for another deployment that would be served alongside new team, squad, and platoon members of an entirely different military police company. With the military short on manpower and stretched thin over two protracted war fronts, multiple warzone deployments have become a standard for reserve and active duty personnel. The specter of military uncertainty, so prevalent in so many of their comments throughout *Deployed*, no longer hovered just below the surface. Written in black and white military orders was the news that their service to the nation, extraordinary as it had already been, was not yet complete. The Bush Administration had geared up for a surge of force on the ground in Iraq, and former members of the 893<sup>rd</sup> would be among these “fresh” troops returning for further engagement.

The sacrifices of the members of the 893<sup>rd</sup>, and that of all of the active duty and reserve soldiers, have recently been recognized by bi-partisan legislative efforts to pass the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, spearheaded by Senator Jim Webb of Virginia. While initially reluctant to sign the act into law, President Bush did so on June 30, 2008. Senator Webb and his colleagues who worked so hard to pass this important new “GI Bill” should certainly be commended. Educational benefits afforded veterans through this law will be instrumental in helping many of them transition to successful civilian careers in similar fashion to the World War II vets who drew upon the Montgomery GI Bill. Still, this legislation and other funding for war veterans including the Veterans Benefits Healthcare and Information Technology Act of 2006, hardly compensates for the heavy burdens borne by a very small number of American citizens—National Guard members and reservists from particular units like the 893<sup>rd</sup> who have been repeatedly deployed—as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue with no end in sight and public attention shifting to domestic matters as the U.S. economy falters. With tough times at home, we worry that that these legislative acts may prompt the rest of us to feel absolved of responsibilities related to the wars and even give us reason to believe that more sacrifices of reservists are justified because of the benefits reservists are getting for health care and education.