



# Paraglide

## **Contractors Now Guarding Bragg Student Crossings**

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*Paraglide - 8 January 2004*

When Fort Bragg students returned to school on Monday, they were greeted by some new faces (and uniforms) at crossing points across the post. Contract crossing guards have assumed the job of seeing children safely across Fort Bragg's streets as they make their way to school.

"Until 1997, the crossing guards were contracted out to civilian employees," said Lt Col Susan Danielson, Fort Bragg Provost Marshal. "At that time the installation ran out of funding for those positions and the duties were given to military police officers. Danielsen said the level of training and the operation tempo have made it impossible for the MPs to keep doing the job.

"When you look at their level of training and the high demand for MPs, it doesn't make sense to have them perform those duties," she said.

Danielson said funds are now available, and the post has contracted Associate Services to provide guards to man the 11 crossing points.

"The guards will have the same primary mission (around post,) which is to ensure the children's safety," said Danielson.

Prior to taking on the job, the guards have been trained to maximize the use of stoplights in crossings, how to stop traffic with hand, arm and whistle signals; and the number of children that can safely cross at one time.

They will also be linked to emergency communication and can summon the MPs or call 911 from their location.

"We're doing everything we can here to ensure they provide great service to the community, while putting the safety of the kids first," said Danielson. She explained the guards will be monitored not only by Associate Services, but also by her office.

"There is a very extreme quality assurance plan in place to ensure that the performance of the guards meets the expectation of the community," she said. "There will be frequent checks on the guards, but our greatest means of feedback is from the community. We

want parents to tell us what they see, what should be improved. The contractor has severe penalties for not performing to standards.”

Danielsen said while the guards are there to make sure children make it safely to school, it is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to ensure their children’s safety. Young children should not walk to school alone. They should be accompanied by an older child or by the parent. Guidelines for supervision required for children on post can be found in Master Policy Letter 87. “We are here to assist with safety, but it is ultimately the parents’ responsibility,” said Danielsen.

Dawn Thomas, a parent of a first grader, said the only reason she lets her son walk to school is because he goes with a group of friends and there are crossing guards along the way.

“We live just down the road from the school, but you never know what could happen,” she said. “My son feels like a “big kid” because he gets to walk to and from school, but I still feel safe knowing that there are crossing guards that watch out for him.”

She noted that MPs will continue to direct traffic at the intersection of Honeycutt Road and Normandy Drive, one of the post’s busiest intersections.