



New VA secretary presents Bronze Star, Purple Heart to wounded Soldier

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald presented Army Staff Sgt. Steven Tessitore the Bronze Star and a Purple Heart medal during a ceremony Dec. 19, 2014, at the Center for the Intrepid at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

Brooke Army Medical Center commander Col. Evan Renz hosted the ceremony, with Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr., vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also in attendance.

"It is heartwarming to see your family here today," said McDonald, who met with Tessitore and his family prior to the ceremony.

"Our nation is indebted

to you and we are also indebted to your family as well."

Tessitore, an infantryman with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, suffered a gunshot wound Nov. 15 while on a quick reaction force in Afghanistan.

McDonald said he read Tessitore's personal account of being wounded and the days that followed.

"He was shot in the throat, gravely wounded and he received what he described as 'the luckiest' lethal wound," McDonald said.

"By Nov. 19, he was communicating with friends, family and fellow Soldiers in Afghanistan. Apart from what that says about technology, think

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Photo by Robert Shields

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald pins Army Staff Sgt. Steven Tessitore with a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart during a ceremony Dec. 19 at the Center for the Intrepid on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. Tessitore, an infantryman with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, suffered a gunshot wound Nov. 15, 2014, while on a quick reaction force in Afghanistan.

Senior military, VA leaders meet wounded troops at CFI

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald visited with wounded service members Dec. 19, 2014, at the Center for the Intrepid at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

The day began with the VA Secretary presenting the Bronze

Star and a Purple Heart to Staff Sgt. Steven Tessitore, an infantryman with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, who suffered a gunshot wound Nov. 15, 2014 while conducting a security patrol in Afghanistan.

Following the ceremony, the group – which also included Laura Junor from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Georgia Tech researchers – met with six amputees whose injuries and stages of care varied and toured

the CFI, Brooke Army Medical Center's state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility.

"We need to continue to advance the state of the art of care for those among our force who have lost a limb," Winnefeld said. "I wanted to bring together a critical mass of customers, leaders, world class medical providers and engineers to see if together there is anything more we can do to

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U.S., MEXICAN ARMY SOLDIERS JUMP

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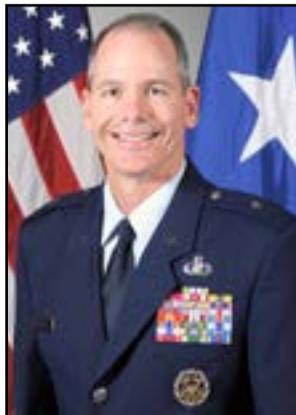
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Commentary: Know what to do in case of a lockdown at Joint Base San Antonio locations

By **Brig. Gen. Bob LaBrutta**
Commander, 502nd Air Base Wing
and Joint Base San Antonio



Brig. Gen. Bob LaBrutta

Winter Sunday afternoons in South Central Texas are terrific aren't they? Football, great weather and opportunities to barbecue -- it just doesn't get much better!

On a recent Sunday afternoon in November, I had just placed a couple of nice ribeyes on the grill when I received a call from the Command Post about a very serious threat to Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. The threat was both significant and credible.

For information, my number one responsibility as the JBSA installation commander is to provide safety, to ensure security and asset protection, and to protect those who work and live on JBSA -- including our families. Accordingly, the seriousness of the situation that day led to my decision to lockdown JBSA-Fort Sam Houston to provide maximum protection until the threat was identified, categorized and neutralized.

This particular threat required an extensive joint effort by many elements of the 502d Air Base Wing and our interagency and community partners. Our 502d Security Forces Squadron at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston was able to swiftly apprehend a suspect, but it took the assistance of our Defenders

from JBSA-Lackland and JBSA-Randolph to assist in enhancing patrols and establishing the proper cordon and securing the scene.

Moreover, our Explosive Ordnance Detachment from JBSA-Lackland responded superbly and was able to clear the scene and rule out any further threats in a relatively short amount of time. Once the threat to JBSA-Fort Sam Houston was characterized, contained and neutralized, I gave the order to end the lockdown.

In total, it took almost 5 hours for us to fully secure the scene. I realize this was a major disruption and inconvenience to many of those of us who live and work on JBSA-Fort Sam Houston -- to include my daughters who were off post when the event occurred. However, you should know the entire 502nd ABW team reacted and responded exactly as they exercise and train --

focused, purposeful and professional.

As important as our first responders were, every person who was on JBSA-Fort Sam Houston that day played a key role in ensuring a successful outcome. However, as is the case with all situations, we have reviewed our actions and procedures extensively, and found some areas where we can and will do better. In addition, we learned some valuable lessons and gained some perspective that I would like to share so we are better prepared "next time."

First, I encourage everyone to remain vigilant and report suspicious individuals or activities to security forces. Keep a protective eye open not just for yourself, but for your neighbor, co-worker and teammates.

Second, if an incident does occur, listen to the directions of our building and facility managers, our security forces, our firefighters, our medical professionals and the announcements that are communicated over the Giant Voice speaker systems at each JBSA location. Most importantly, know what to do and where to go during the increased security/force protection levels.

Specifically, during a lockdown, no one will be authorized to enter or exit the installation, with the exception of emergency or essential

personnel. Therefore, individuals should seek immediate shelter.

If you are indoors, close and secure the doors, close curtains and blinds, keep away from windows and, if warranted, barricade entryways. If outdoors, proceed to the nearest location that affords cover/protection and remain in place until the lockdown is lifted.

Third, keep the phone lines clear unless there is another emergency requiring immediate attention. Do not call the Base Defense Operations Center, Command Post or other emergency agencies for a status update. Please realize that every non-emergency call of this type could prevent an urgent call from coming through because they take up critical bandwidth. Moreover, these types of calls take our first responders' focus off the task at hand.

For updates on the situation, you should instead call our "Straight Talk Line." This line is specifically designed to provide periodic updates on the situation and will provide callers instructions, as needed during a crisis or emergency. The numbers are: 466-4630 at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, 671-NEWS (6397) at JBSA-Lackland and 652-7469 at JBSA-Randolph. I recommend everyone add these numbers to your respective contact lists so the information is easily

accessible.

Finally, as we experienced that day in November, when the installation or a location in JBSA is "locked down," it could take hours to go through the necessary steps to mitigate the situation and reopen the gates.

Because of this, we need the lanes near the installation to remain clear to allow emergency responders or essential personnel to get onto base/post so they can respond to the situation in a timely manner. Parking on the side of the road, access roads or entry ramps, creates unsafe congestion at the gates, and also impacts the major highways leading into our JBSA locations. Moreover, these bottlenecks slow down our ability to execute the mission. Therefore, if you are one of those members who are stuck outside the installation, I ask that you turn around, find a place to grab a cup of coffee, do a little shopping or visit with friends or family.

As always, our first responders stand ready to take action on a moment's notice and will respond immediately when a threat occurs. On that November Sunday afternoon, it was only a matter of minutes before our Security Forces professionals had the suspect in custody. Within an 1½

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News Briefs

Career And Volunteer Fair

A career and volunteer fair takes place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday at the Military & Family Readiness Center, 3060 Stanley Road, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. The event includes a dress for success seminar and fashion show, 10 steps to a federal job workshop, employment assistance workshop, a volunteer orientation workshop and education opportunities. The event is free and open to all Department of Defense ID card holders. Call 221-9196/2380 for more information.

New DOD Food Service Charges At Dining Facilities

As of Jan. 1, the following rates apply to dining facilities not using the a la carte pricing system, such as Slagel, Rocco, B5107, B5105, Medical Readiness DFAC, and all basic military training facilities: breakfast, \$3.45; lunch, \$5.55 and dinner, \$4.85. In addition, meals ready-to-eat and flight meals are priced at \$5.55 each. For more information on dining facilities to include hours, contact information and address, visit <http://www.jbsa.af.mil/library/diningfacilities.asp>.

AETC Awards Luncheon

Tickets are on sale for the Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Annual Awards Luncheon, scheduled at 11 a.m. Jan. 30 at the International Ballroom, Parr Club, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph. Attire for attendees is uniform for the day for military and casual for civilians. For attendees, attire id service dress for military and business suit or pant/shirt/dress for civilians. All meals are \$17, payable by cash or credit card. Meal options are curried chicken with mango and cantaloupe slaw served over jasmine rice and vegetables, beef medallions with pink vodka sauce balsamic grilled vegetables with roasted red potatoes or linguini topped with vodka sauce and grilled vegetables. RSVP by Jan. 23 at 652-2263 or 652-8026. An online invitation can be found at <https://einvitations.afit.edu/inv/anim.cfm?i=219344&k=00604B0A7F53>

Blast, Gunshot Wound Study at BAMC

People who have sustained a gunshot or blast injury can take part in a Brooke Army Medical Center

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MEXICAN, U.S. SOLDIERS JUMP AT JBSA-CAMP BULLIS



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Wynn Hoke

Two 82nd Airborne Division Soldiers assist a member of the Fuerzas Armadas de México (Mexican Armed Forces) in preparing his parachute Dec. 16, 2014, prior to a jump at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.



Mexican airborne soldiers and 82nd Airborne Division Soldiers combine for a jump from a C-130 Dec. 16 over JBSA-Camp Bullis. Sixty Soldiers, roughly half of whom were with the Fuerzas Armadas de México (Mexican Armed Forces), jumped in groups of 20, which required the first two groups to quickly evacuate the drop zone.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Wynn Hoke



Members of the 82nd Airborne Division and Fuerzas Armadas de México (Mexican Armed Forces) pose after their jumps from a C-130 Dec. 16 at JBSA-Camp Bullis.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Corinna Baltos

Air Force Medical Support Agency commander visits WHASC, SAMMC

By Staff Sgt. Christopher Carwile
59th Medical Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. James McClain, Air Force Medical Support Agency commander, tried to cover as much ground as he could during his short visit to the San Antonio area.

McClain started early Dec. 8, 2014, as the keynote speaker at the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Consortium Winter Commencement ceremony, held at the San Antonio Military Medical Center on JBSA-Fort Sam Houston. Shortly after, he met with the SAUSHEC dean, Dr. W. Scott Jones, to discuss the benefits and

future of allied health care, and the efficiencies of integrated environments.

McClain also toured areas of the 959th Medical Group Biomedical Service Corps to include the simulation center, in-patient pharmacy, and emergency department.

Before leaving SAMMC, McClain held a BSC call to pass on information about upcoming changes and opportunities in the military medical field, and to answer questions.

After his visit at SAMMC, McClain visited the Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at JBSA-Lackland,

where he had previously served as vice commander of the 59th Medical Wing.

While at the WHASC, Col. John Andrus, 59th Medical Operations Group commander, led McClain on Lean Daily Management rounds through various work centers to further explain the LDM process and goals. Lean Daily Management allows clinics to identify and improve processes that need improvement and determine the root cause through data collection.

McClain wrapped up the day with a BSC call for corps members at WHASC. "This is a



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Carwile

Thomas Kai (right), Graduate Medical Education coordinator for simulation, explains to Brig. Gen. James McClain, Air Force Medical Support Agency commander, the advanced capabilities of simulation training dummies and scenarios that were available to students; during his visit Dec. 8, 2014, at the San Antonio Military Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. McClain served as keynote speaker during the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium Winter Commencement and then toured 59th Medical Wing Biomedical Service Corps areas at both SAMMC and the Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center on JBSA-Lackland.

great time to be in the military medical field," McClain emphasized. "We are in the begin-

ning of a lot of change, and it can be frustrating, but it is also a great time for opportunity."

NMETC Petty Officer Association throws Christmas party for kids

By Petty Officer 1st Class
Jacquelyn D. Childs
NMETC Public Affairs

Sailors from Navy Medicine Training Support Center's Petty Officer Association hosted a brunch with Santa Dec. 20, 2014, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. The POA membership is made up of petty officers third and second class.

Navy, Army, and Air Force staff from the Medical Education and Training Campus were all invited to bring their little ones.

"All our staff and instructors are just so busy," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jessica Rahe, POA president. "We just wanted to do something to give back and boost morale for them and their families. We already had a command Christmas party but that was focused on adults. We did this for the kids."

With support from the officer's wardroom, Chief Petty Officer Association and First Class Petty Officer Association, the POA planned and prepared enough food for 100 children and their parents. Brunch included pancakes, eggs, dinosaur chicken nuggets, fruit, cupcakes and more.

In addition to the food, the Sailors set up two bounce houses, games



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Jacquelyn D. Childs
Petty Officer 1st Class Phillip Archunde, dressed as Santa Claus, talks to children at a Dec. 20, 2014, holiday party hosted by Navy Medicine Training Support Center's Petty Officer Association. The POA threw the celebration for Medicine Education and Training Center's staff and their families.

to include musical chairs and ring toss, provided goodie boxes for each child in attendance and provided an area to take photos with Santa.

"I think it's really cool for the kids," said Chelsea McNeely, a parent in attendance who brought her 8-year-old son. "We came out just so he can play with the other kids. He seems to really be enjoying it, especially the games."

This was the POA's second time holding the brunch with Santa, and members felt like it was a success.

"This was our second annual brunch," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Jones, POA public affairs officer.

"We really just want to keep it going."

NMTSC is an echelon four command reporting directly to the Navy Medicine Education and Training Command, which manages Navy Medicine's formal education and training programs.

Both are part of the Navy Medicine team, a global health care network of Navy medical professionals around the world who provide high-quality health care to eligible beneficiaries.

Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ships, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

Did you know?

One of the best things about ICE is that people can let service providers know when they do a great job, not just for poor service.

It takes 5 minutes or less to submit a comment at <http://ice.disa.mil>.



AMEDD Center and School hosts annual graduate school research day

By Phil Reidinger
AMEDDC&S Public Affairs

The Academy of Health Sciences Graduate School held its 4th Annual Research Day at the Army Medical Department Center and School in Willis Hall, Blesse Auditorium on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Dec 10, 2014. Dr. Sunil Ahuja, professor, Departments of Medicine, Microbiology, Immunology and Biochemistry at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio was keynote speaker.

During his presentation, Ahuja described his studies focused on genes and diseases. He said that disease is an outcome of the interaction between genes and the environment. Ahuja described the study of genes as the way ahead to predict, prevent, personalize and initiate patient participation in disease treatment.

The Graduate School Research Day featured 32 poster presentations and seven invited podium presentations.

In addition to presentations by the

Army Medical Department Center and School graduate students, faculty from University of Texas Health Science Center, University of Texas School of Public Health, Texas State University, University of the Incarnate Word and St. Mary's University participated.

Col. Josef Moore, dean of the graduate school, noted that during 2013 faculty and students published 79 research papers and presented 77 invited lectures about their work. Faculty and students received 13 research awards and research grants totaled \$18.1 million.

First place for poster presentation was awarded to Lt. Col. Mark Thelen for his topic "A Novel Return To Duty Screening Tool For Military Clinicians."

First place for podium presentation was awarded to Capt. Debra Valdivieso for her research topic titled "Evaluation of the Anxiolytic Effects of Asiatic Acid, a Compound From Gotu Kola or Centella Asiatica, in the Male Sprague-Dawley Rat."



Photo by Phil Reidinger

Maj. Fred Weigel served as one of seven judges for the Graduate School poster presentation competition during the 4th annual Academy of Health Sciences Graduate School Research Day Dec. 10, 2014, at the Army Medical Department Center and School in Willis Hall, Blesse Auditorium on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

News Briefs

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Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation study investigating the long-term effects of retained metal fragments sustained from combat wounds. Participants must have been injured while deployed by a blast with or without retained metal fragments it must be more than three months since the injury. Participants must be 18 or older and the study requires one visit, a study questionnaire and a blood draw. Study participants will also receive a gift card as compensation. Call 916-7879 or 916-9181 for more information.

DOD Updates Guidance On Tuition Assistance, Education Benefits

The Department of Defense recently updated guidance on the utilization of tuition assistance and Department of Veterans Affairs education benefits. DOD and VA have announced that service members are no longer authorized to use both TA and VA benefits from the Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve program (Chapter 1606 of Title 10, United States Code) or Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 1607 of Title 10, United States Code) for the same course. Service members can use TA and VA benefits from the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program (Chapter 30 of Title 38, United States Code) or Post-9/11 GI Bill program (Chapter 33 of Title 38, United States Code) simultaneously for the same course through the TA Top-up benefit. The amount of the Top-up benefit can be equal to the difference between the total cost of a college course and the amount of TA that is paid by the Army for the course. The amount of the benefit is limited to the amount that the person would receive for the same course if regular GI Bill benefits (Chapter 30/33) were being paid. In no case can the amount paid by TA combined with the amount paid by VA be more than the total cost of the course. If a military member receives the Top-up benefit, his or her regular GI Bill benefits will be reduced. Reserve component military members who qualify for Chapter 30 Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits may use those benefits concurrently with TA. Call 1-888-442-4551 or visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov> for more information.

ARMY NORTH COLOR GUARD REPRESENTS AT ARMY ALL-AMERICAN BOWL



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Wynn Hoke

(Above) Soldiers with U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) carry the colors during the opening ceremony of the Army All-American Bowl Jan. 3 at the Alamodome in San Antonio. The annual football game, now in its 15th year, highlights the best of the best in senior high school football players from around the nation.



(Above) Players from the East (black) and West (gold) U.S. Army All-American Bowl teams collide on the Alamodome field in San Antonio Jan. 3 at the start of the game. The annual football game highlights the best of the best in senior high school football players from around the nation. The West won the game, 39-36.



(Left) Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond Chandler III prepares to make the coin toss during the opening of the U.S. Army All-American Bowl Jan. 3 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, as Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Daniel Allyn looks on with the referees and players. The annual football game features the 90 best senior high school football players in the nation.

WARRIOR AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER 'SNOWS' HOW TO HAVE FUN



A worker has a "blast" spraying snow down Dec. 15, 2014, before the Warrior and Family Support Center's annual Winter Wonderland event at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

Service members and families got to "chill out" Dec. 15, 2014 during the Warrior and Family Support Center's annual Winter Wonderland event at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. While most residents of Texas might not recognize the fluffy white stuff, all who attended shared in the snowy fun and then visited with Santa and Mrs. Claus in between snacks and drinks.

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher DeHart

Service members and families visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus in between snacks and drinks Dec. 15, 2014 during the Warrior and Family Support Center's annual Winter Wonderland event at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

TxDOT, 502nd Air Base Wing partner on travel options study

The Texas Department of Transportation and the 502nd Air Base Wing have partnered on a study of employee commute preferences to better understand regional congestion patterns.

The Active Travel Demand Management Travel Options Study is sponsored by TxDOT to promote travel option programs to employers, employees and other stakeholders along the most congested corridors in the San Antonio area.

The goal is to describe the benefits, both for employers and employees, of alternative scheduling such as tele-

commuting, flex-time, compressed work weeks, and ridesharing options such as carpooling, vanpooling and using public transportation.

The project team will document strategies already in place, and provide recommendations and a framework for the travel options that will work best for employees.

The commuter survey portion of this study is a means of understanding individual commute patterns, such as how long it takes and how individuals go about meeting their travel needs on a daily basis.

As congestion increases in the San Antonio

metro area, the TxDOT and the 502nd ABW are interested in learning about what other options you might be interested in.

Input from customers is the foundation of the study and will also let us know how we can better support our employees. The survey is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to provide valuable feedback.

The survey link is <http://tinyurl.com/JBSA-commute>. The data collection phase will extend through mid-January. For more information, call 652-3477 or 652-5307.

(Source: 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron)

LABRUTTA from P2

hours, our EOD technicians were at the scene, began their screening of the suspicious vehicle and worked diligently to clear the threat over the next three hours. Once EOD determined there was no threat, I was provided the information needed to return JBSA-Fort Sam Houston to normal operations. All of them did an

outstanding job!

I'm also grateful for the exceptional support and responsiveness we received from our San Antonio Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations partners who provided expert advice and support throughout the event.

In closing, you should be proud of the steadfast dedication of the

502nd ABW and JBSA first responders for their hard work, dedication and loyal diligence in ensuring the safety of us all. It's teamwork that made this response successful, and it's teamwork (plus all of us following the recommendations I listed above) that are the keys to keeping JBSA safe and secure today, tomorrow and into the future!

AIR FORCE FATHER, SON HEADING TO NEW ASSIGNMENT TOGETHER



Photo by Lt. Col. Jessica Spittler

Airman 1st Class Nicholas Frazier (right), shares a moment with his father, Master Sgt. Stewart Frazier, at the Medical Materiel Apprentice Course graduation ceremony Dec. 9, 2014, on the Medical Education and Training Campus. Nicholas, who graduated on the Dean's List, and his father have both received orders to Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. The elder Frazier is assigned as a recruiter while the younger Frazier is assigned to the 72nd Medical Group. Nicholas Frazier is looking forward to some family get-togethers. "I'm going to be living in the dorms on base, but it will be nice to have my family and a home-cooked dinner only 20 minutes away!"

2014 YEAR IN REVIEW



Photo by Marilyn Holliday

An Air Force C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft makes its way up Texas State Highway Loop 1604 to its final destination at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis March 2, 2014. The retired, partially disassembled Air Force C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft was towed on highways between Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland and the Medical Readiness Training Center at JBSA-Camp Bullis. The aircraft's four-hour road trip was successfully accomplished through combined efforts of members from the 502nd Trainer Development Squadron at JBSA-Randolph, JBSA-Lackland Security Forces, San Antonio Police Department, Texas Highway Patrol and World Wide Aircraft Recovery.



Photo by Lisa Braun

Brig. Gen. Robert I. Miller (right) relieved Rear Adm. William M. Roberts (center) as the third commandant of the Medical Education and Training Campus during a change of command ceremony Sept. 24, 2014, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. Miller is METC's first Air Force commandant, a position that also inherits the dual hat of education and training director for the new Defense Health Agency. Lt. Gen. Douglas Robb (left), director of the Defense Health Agency, presided over the ceremony. The ceremony reflected the tri-service nature of METC, which trains enlisted Army, Navy and Air Force students to become medics, hospital corpsmen, medical technicians or specialists in an array of medical fields.



Photo by Joshua Rodriguez

Army Lt. Gen. David D. Halverson accepts the colors from Army Gen. John F. Campbell, U.S. Army vice chief of staff and presiding officer, and assumes duties as the commanding general of the Installation Management Command and Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, during a change of command ceremony April 8, 2014.



Photo by Maj. Brandon Lingle

U.S. service members assigned to the Craig Joint Theater Hospital and 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, "DUSTOFF," at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, teamed together Aug. 5 to administer emergency care for victims of a mass casualty incident. Army Spec. Tyler Lenzert (left), Air Force 1st Lt. Helene Gold (center) and Senior Airman Lucas Reaume (right) rush a patient into the Craig Joint Theater Hospital during a mass casualty response at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Aug. 5, 2014. Gold and Reaume were deployed from Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, while Lenzert is deployed from the 814th Area Support Medical Company, Bismarck, N.D.



Photo by Robert Shields

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel speaks with Army Sgt. Matthew Melancon at the Gait and Motion Analysis Laboratory during his tour of the Center for the Intrepid Jan. 8, 2014.



Photo by Eric Lucero

Army Sgt. 1st Class Steven Guzman, U.S. Army South operational protection directorate, prepares to throw a training grenade during the 2014 Best Warrior Competition May 6, 2014, at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis.



Photo by Army Sgt. John Healy

A Soldier conducts reconnaissance of a building July 23, 2014, during Vibrant Response 14, an Army North-led training exercise at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Complex, Ind. The major field training exercise was conducted by the U.S. Northern Command and led by Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston's U.S. Army North. As a component of U.S. Northern Command, ARNORTH coordinates timely federal and military response to disasters in the homeland to help the American people.



Photo by Robert Shields

Brig. Gen. Barbara Holcomb, Southern Regional Medical Command commander, passes the guidon to incoming commander Col. Evan Renz during Brooke Army Medical Center's change of command ceremony Oct. 20, 2014, at the Army Medical Department Museum Amphitheater on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. From 2003-2013, Renz was assigned to the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, most recently serving as the director of the ISR Burn Center at BAMC, the Defense Department's only burn center.



Photo by Dan Solis

NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal's basketball jersey was retired by Robert G. Cole High School officials March 7, 2014, during a 25th anniversary ceremony in the school's gymnasium at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. The ceremony commemorated the team's 36-0 season and 1989 state championship. O'Neal played for the Cougars during his junior and senior years.



Photo by Robin Jerstad, used by permission of the San Antonio Express-News

2014 San Antonio Rock 'n' Roll Marathon winner Army Capt. Jacob Buhler from Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston celebrates his win Dec. 7, 2014. The 28-year-old dentist notched a time of 2 hours, 29 minutes and 4 seconds over the 26.2-mile course that wound through various San Antonio neighborhoods and past more than two dozen local musical acts.

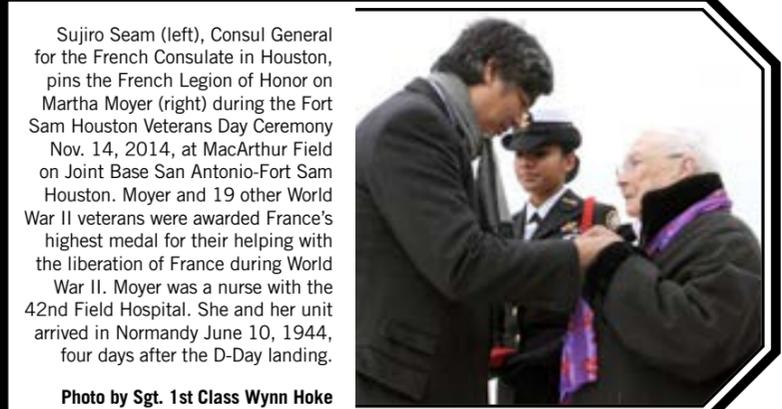


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Wynn Hoke

Sujiro Seam (left), Consul General for the French Consulate in Houston, pins the French Legion of Honor on Martha Moyer (right) during the Fort Sam Houston Veterans Day Ceremony Nov. 14, 2014, at MacArthur Field on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. Moyer and 19 other World War II veterans were awarded France's highest medal for their helping with the liberation of France during World War II. Moyer was a nurse with the 42nd Field Hospital. She and her unit arrived in Normandy June 10, 1944, four days after the D-Day landing.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

Army Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr. (right), commander of U.S. Northern Command and NORAD, observes an instructor during the Department of Defense medical support team training Oct. 24, 2014, at the San Antonio Military Medical Center on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. The students were part of a 30-person team designated for "prepare to deploy" status in the event of an Ebola crisis in the United States. U.S. Northern Command tasked U. S. Army North (Fifth Army) to work with medical experts to devise and lead the team's training.



Photo by Elaine Sanchez

Retired Staff Sgt. Ben Eberle (center) with his wife, Ashley, and daughter, Halle, receive the unit patch and certificate from Navy Capt. Chris Cassidy (right), NASA astronaut, Sept. 22, 2014, at the Center for Intrepid. Visiting Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Cassidy, a former Navy SEAL, brought back mementos that flew on board the International Space Station to recipients at the Center for the Intrepid. Cassidy first visited BAMC in March 2012 and then made his second visit via teleconference from the ISS in May 2013 while he was orbiting 260 miles above Earth.

LEADERS from P1

improve the quality of life for our wounded, ill and injured warriors.”

The amputees talked candidly about their experiences with their prostheses, what kinds of challenges they face using their devices, and the level of care they have received both at the CFI and at other military and civilian hospitals.

“I really enjoyed listening to this group of warriors, medical pros, leaders and researchers put their heads together,” the vice chairman said.

All agreed that the level of care at the CFI is exceptional.

“We had an excellent tour of this state-of-the-art facility and the group was able to not only engage with the incredible professionals here, but also gain invaluable insight from the wounded warriors we met today,” Winnefeld said.

“I always enjoy visiting the Center for the Intrepid because I experience the



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jonathan Snyder

Col. (Dr.) Donald Gajewski (left), director of the Center for the Intrepid, briefs Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. (right) and Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald (center) on a firearms training simulator Dec. 19, 2014, during a tour of the Center for the Intrepid at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

enthusiasm of the wonderful medical staff and I really get motivated by the determination of the patients here.

“These warriors are a special group of Americans,”

Winnefeld added. “They’re showing us through their hard work and dedication how their ability triumphs over their disability. We owe them all our very best efforts.”

BAMC from P1

about what it says about our Soldiers – about their focus, their fortitude and their skills in life-saving first aid in the direst of circumstance,” the secretary said.

“Think what it says about all the surgeons, doctors, nurses and support staff who attended to Sergeant Tessitore from the dirty, dusty streets of a faraway land to the pristine Brooke Army Medical Center.”

McDonald thanked Tessitore for his service and sacrifice, and promised that when it was time, the VA will be honored to care for him and his family, and “will provide all the services and benefits he has so richly earned.”

Tessitore received the Bronze Star for “his outstanding performance, expertise and dedication to duty which greatly contributed to the success of the unit’s mission during combat operations.”

The Bronze Star is the fourth highest individual military award and the ninth-highest by order of precedence in the U.S.

military. It may be awarded for acts of heroism, acts of merit or meritorious service in a combat zone.

The Purple Heart is the oldest U.S. military decoration in present use and the first American award made available to the common Soldier. The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hand of the enemy.

“Nobody in their right mind wants a Purple Heart and I find myself receiving one today against everything that I have ever wanted, but I appreciate it,” Tessitore said. “The only reason I am here today to receive this medal is because of my unit and how well they prepared, so on behalf of Bravo Company 2-162 and my entire battalion, thank you very much for taking care of me and for allowing me to be here today.”

Following the ceremony McDonald and Winnefeld spoke with amputees about their care and toured the CFI and BAMC.

IMCOM commander welcomes gold star families at Army-Navy game

By Tim Hipps

U.S. Army Installation Management Command Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. David Halverson has been going to Army-Navy football games since 1975, when he was a cadet at the United States Military Academy. He estimates attending 15 of the 115 clashes of the archrivals during his 39 years in uniform.

Although he's not exactly sure how many games he has attended, the 115th Army-Navy game is one Halverson likely will never forget.

On Dec. 13, 2014, Halverson, as the commander of U.S. Army Installation Management Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston and the Army's assistant chief of staff for installation management, welcomed Army and Navy gold star families to the nationally televised game.

"I would not want to be any place but here right now," Halverson said after leading the survivors of fallen service members from the stands onto the field during pre-game festivities. "Our survivors are so important to us, because they know the price of freedom. We can sit here and talk about it, but they've experienced it.

"For us to be able to be with them right now and talk about their brothers, fathers and husbands, and see how they're doing, that means a lot," he continued. "We want to be able to continue to let them know that the Army family is always here for them."

During the past year, the U.S. Army Installation Management Command's Survivor Outreach Services has been raising awareness of the mean-



Photo by Tim Hipps

Lt. Gen. David Halverson, commander of U.S. Army Installation Management Command and assistant chief of staff for installation management, spends time with Seth Parrish, the gold star son of fallen Sgt. Maj. Harry Lewis Parrish, at the 115th Army-Navy football game Dec. 13, 2014, at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore.

ing and significance of the gold star. Actor Gary Sinise provided the voice for several public service announcements that feature moms and dads, brothers and sisters, husbands, wives and children of fallen service members.

Halverson received first-hand feedback from each of those groups.

"They don't have to worry about ever imposing because we want to be with them," he said. "We want to hear about their fallen. We want them to know that we cherish them because they are the true heroes."

In 1947, Congress approved the use of the gold star lapel button, or pin, as a way to recognize the families of service members who lost their lives while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States. In 1977, the Army approved issue of the pin for the next of kin of deceased personnel to honor those who died while serving on active duty or while assigned in a reserve or National Guard unit in a drill status.

To demonstrate the

Army's commitment to supporting gold star families and as part of the gold star awareness campaign, Installation Management Command Survivor Outreach Ser-

vices and the Navy gold star program coordinated with presenting sponsor, USAA, which hosted 20 Army and Navy surviving military family members at the game.

Debbie Parrish, widow of Sgt. Maj. Harry Lewis Parrish, and her son, Seth, 5, were among the group. On Aug. 1, 2009, Debbie lost her husband and Seth lost his father, whom he never got to meet.

"It was a month before Seth was born," she explained.

At M&T Bank Stadium, Seth kept tugging on Halverson's pants leg, attempting to thank the general for giving him a commander's coin.

"He wanted to go up and personally thank him," Debbie said.

Halverson was encouraged by the feedback he

received from the families.

"They are saying 'thanks' – a pure and genuine 'thanks' – thanks for remembering us," he said. "They are very proud of the sacrifices of their fallen, and that's what's most important. That's why we always say 'We shall never forget,' and 'Freedom is not free.'"

Halverson was impressed with "the sparkle and resiliency" the survivors exuded as they proudly shared memories of their fallen loved ones.

"It's really important for them to know that they're still in the Army," Halverson said. "We're a 'Soldier for Life,' and we want them to know that they're always welcome in 'The Army's Home,' and that the Army is their family.

That's what the military lifestyle is all about. You get two families -- the one you were born with, and the one you serve with.

"We'll never forget, and we're always here for you," he said.

Parrish sensed that feeling, too, and she'll certainly never forget.

"It's been an emotional day, just listening to others share their losses and reflect back and to realize how honored Harry is to the Army," she said. "I told Seth as we were walking onto the field that this is honoring my husband and his memory and his service to the country.

"I feel like we're representing him," she said.

"That's really important for us," Halverson said.

"And we will continue to be vigilant with our efforts."



Photo by Tim Hipps

Gold star families and friends pose with Lt. Gen. David Halverson (far right), commander of U.S. Army Installation Management Command and assistant chief of staff for installation management, at the 115th Army-Navy football game Dec. 13, 2014, at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore.

Air Force seeks active duty enlisted applicants for Nurse Enlisted Commissioning Program

By Debbie Gildea

Air Force Personnel Center
Public Affairs

Eligible active-duty enlisted Airmen interested in a nursing commission have until Feb. 27 to get career field functional manager approval and submit an "intent to apply" email to the Air Force Personnel Center, officials at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph said Dec. 17.

The Nurse Enlisted Commissioning Program offers members an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing and an Air Force commission, said Sandra Bruce, an AFPC nurse education program manager.

The selection board

will convene in May 2015, but a variety of administrative requirements must be accomplished first, so Airmen should begin preparation now to ensure they have time to complete those requirements, Bruce explained.

The program is open to senior airmen and above, who meet academic and administrative criteria. Participants must be able to complete the program within 24 consecutive months and earn their commission by the time they are 42 years old.

In addition, applicants must be U.S. citizens, have a current security clearance and be world-wide qualified. Members selected for the program must begin classes during

the fall 2015 term.

Applicants must select a school that is nationally accredited and either has an Air Force ROTC detachment on the campus or a cross-town agreement with an Air Force ROTC detachment. Tuition and fees are limited to \$15,000 per academic year, and the annual textbook allowance is limited to \$600.

Application suspense dates:

Feb. 27

- Notification of intent to apply
- Gain release from career field functional manager

March 27

- Complete all prerequisites (prerequisites cannot be waived)
- Submit transcripts for

academic evaluation

April 5

- Submit chief nurse interview

April 30

- Submit completed application (applications must be coordinated through the chain of command and must include first sergeant and commander letters of recommendation)

For eligibility criteria and application instructions, visit the Air Force Medical Service Knowledge Exchange at <https://kx2.afms.mil/kj/kx1/AF-NurseEducation> or go to myPers at <http://mypers.af.mil> and select "Search All Components" from the drop down menu and enter "Nurse Enlisted Commissioning Program" in the search window.

CHAPEL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

PROTESTANT SERVICES

Sundays

Main Post (Gift) Chapel

Building 2200, 2301 Wilson Way
8 and 11 a.m. - Traditional

Dodd Field Chapel

Building 1721, 5584 Dodd Blvd.
8:30 a.m. - Samoan
10:30 a.m. - Gospel

Army Medical Department

Regimental Chapel

Building 1398, 3545 Garden Ave.
9:20 a.m. - 32nd Medical Brigade
Contemporary Service

11:01 - Contemporary "Crossroads"

Brooke Army Medical

Center Chapel

Building 3600,
3551 Roger Brooke Rd.
10 a.m. - Traditional

CATHOLIC SERVICES

Daily Mass

Brooke Army Medical Center Chapel
Building 3600,
3551 Roger Brooke Rd.

11:05 a.m., Monday through Friday

Main Post (Gift) Chapel

Building 2200, 2301 Wilson Way

11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday

Saturday

Main Post (Gift) Chapel

4:45 p.m. - Reconciliation
5:30 p.m. - Evening Mass

Sunday

8 a.m. - Morning Mass, AMEDD
8:30 a.m. - Morning Mass, BAMC
9:30 a.m. - Morning Mass, MPC
11:30 a.m. - Morning Mass, BAMC
12:30 p.m. - Afternoon Mass, DFC

JEWISH SERVICES

8 p.m. - Jewish Worship,
Friday, MPC
8:30 p.m. - Oneg Shabbat,
Friday, MPC

ISLAMIC SERVICE

1:15 p.m. - Jummah, Friday,
AMEDD

LATTER DAY SAINTS SERVICES

1 p.m. - LDS Worship, Sunday,
AMEDD

BUDDHIST SERVICES

1 p.m. - Buddhist Services, Sun-
day, AMEDD

*For worship opportunities of faith groups not listed here,
please visit the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Chaplain's website at
<http://www.jbsa.af.mil/jbsachapel/samhoustan.asp>.*

Operation Enduring Freedom comes to an end

President Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel each issued statements Dec. 28, 2014, marking the end of the combat mission in Afghanistan.

After 13 years of combat operations, Operation Enduring Freedom drew to a close today in a ceremony at the International Security and Assistance Force headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan.

“Today’s ceremony in Kabul marks a milestone for our country,” Obama said. “For more than 13 years, ever since nearly 3,000 innocent lives were taken from us on 9/11, our nation has been at war in Afghanistan. Now, thanks to the extraordinary sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, our combat mission in Afghanistan is ending, and the longest war in American history is coming to a responsible conclusion.”

“At the end of this year,” Hagel said, “as our Afghan partners assume responsibility for the security of their country, the United States officially concludes Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2015, we begin our follow-on mission – Operation Freedom’s Sentinel – to help secure and build upon the hard-fought gains of the last 13 years.”

Today, though, “we give thanks to our troops and intelligence personnel who have been relentless against the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 – devastating the core al-Qaida leadership, delivering justice to Osama bin Laden, disrupting terrorist plots

and saving countless American lives,” the president said.

“We are safer, and our nation is more secure, because of their service,” he said. “At the same time, our courageous military and diplomatic personnel in Afghanistan – along with our NATO allies and coalition partners – have helped the Afghan people reclaim their communities, take the lead for their own security, hold historic elections and complete the first democratic transfer of power in their country’s history.”

“I want to express my deep gratitude to all U.S. personnel, both military and civilian, who have served in Afghanistan since 2001, many on multiple deployments,” Hagel said. “I also thank the thousands more who were a part of the mission at home and around the world. In fighting America’s longest war, our people and their families have borne a heavy burden, and some paid the ultimate price.”

“We honor the profound sacrifices that have made this progress possible,” the president said. “We salute every American – military and civilian, including our dedicated diplomats and development workers – who have served in Afghanistan, many on multiple tours, just as their families have sacrificed at home.

“We pledge to give our many wounded warriors, with wounds seen and unseen, the world-class care and treatment they have earned. Most of all, we remember the more than 2,200 American patriots who made



Photo courtesy International Security Assistance Force

Command Sergeant Major Delbert D. Byers (left), salutes during the presentation of the Resolute Support Colors at the Change of Mission Ceremony in Kabul. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization change of mission ceremony from International Security Assistance Force to Resolute Support Mission was held Dec. 28, 2014, in Kabul, Afghanistan.

the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, and we pledge to stand with their Gold Star families who need the everlasting love and support of a grateful nation.”

“Afghanistan remains a dangerous place, and the Afghan people and their security forces continue to make tremendous sacrifices in defense of their country,” Obama said. “At the invitation of the Afghan government, and to preserve the gains we have made together, the United States – along with our allies and part-

ners – will maintain a limited military presence in Afghanistan.”

The United States will pursue two missions in Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, Hagel said.

“We will work with our allies and partners as part of NATO’s Resolute Support mission to continue training, advising and assisting Afghan security forces. And we will continue our counterterrorism mission against the remnants of Al-Qaeda to ensure that Afghanistan is never again used to stage attacks against

our homeland.”

“Our personnel will continue to face risks, but this reflects the enduring commitment of the United States to the Afghan people and to a united, secure and sovereign Afghanistan that is never again used as a source of attacks against our nation,” Obama said.

“These past 13 years have tested our nation and our military,” the president said. “But compared to the nearly 180,000 American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan when I took office, we

now have fewer than 15,000 in those countries. Some 90 percent of our troops are home.

“Our military remains the finest in the world, and we will remain vigilant against terrorist attacks and in defense of the freedoms and values we hold dear. And with growing prosperity here at home, we enter a new year with new confidence, indebted to our fellow Americans in uniform who keep us safe and free.”

(Source: DOD News, Defense Media Activity)

INSIDE THE GATE

Bowlers receive free games when purchasing food

Through February 2015, patrons spending \$7 at the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Bowling Center Snack Bar can show your receipt at the bowling counter to receive two games free, including rental shoes. This special is valid every Wednesday and Thursday from 4 p.m. to close. For more information, call 221-3683.

'The Murder Room' At Harlequin Dinner Theatre

The Harlequin Dinner Theatre starts their 2015 season with "The Murder Room" by Jack Sharkey.

This is a fast-paced British farce, with a kooky plot full of ups and down, mistaken identities, hysterical characters, lots of action and witty, clever dialogue. Who is trying to kill who, how and where? It runs Thursday through Feb. 28, and is sponsored by THE GUNN AUTOMOTIVE GROUP. No federal endorsement of sponsor is implied or intended. For more information or to make reservations, call 222-9694.

Frosty 5K Fun Run/Walk

The Frosty 5K takes place at 9 a.m. Thursday beginning at the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Aquatic Center parking lot and is open to all Department of Defense ID cardholders. No registration is required and sign-in will begin at 8:30 a.m. the day of the race. Runners can treat themselves to a cup of hot chocolate at the end of

the race. For more information, call 808-5708.

Get Lucky At Monte Carlo Night

Roll the dice at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club from 6:30-11 p.m. Jan. 30 as you enjoy a night of gaming, food and the chance to win prizes such as a large flat-screen TV, iPad or tablet, spa gift certificate, Kindle Fire and more. Cost is \$20. There is limited space so reservations are required. This event is sponsored by THE GUNN AUTOMOTIVE GROUP. No federal endorsement of sponsor is implied or intended. To make a reservation, call 222-9386.

Men's, Women's Iron Bench Press Classic

All Department of Defense ID cardholders, age 18 and over, are invited to the Jimmy Brought

Fitness Center at 9 a.m. Jan. 31 to turn on their "beast mode" for the Iron Bench Press Classic. There will be categories for men's open, women's open and masters (age 40-plus). All competitors will receive a T-shirt and prizes will be awarded for first and second place in each category, as well as an award for best overall lifter. The entry fee is \$30, and all registration forms must be in no later than Jan. 19. Registration forms available at the Jimmy Brought Fitness Center. Call 221-1234 or 295-9105.

Helping Us Grow Securely Playgroup

The interactive playgroup for parents and children up to age 5 meets 9-11 a.m. Tuesdays at the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Middle School Teen Center. Call 221-0349 or 221-2418.

Take Aim at Sportsman's Range

Hours for the Sportsman's Range at JBSA-Camp Bullis are now 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., weather permitting. Cost to shoot is \$10 per DOD ID cardholder and \$15 per non-DOD ID cardholder. A DOD ID cardholder can purchase an annual pass for \$60. DOD cardholders may sponsor two guests. Cardholders are allowed to sponsor two non-DOD ID cardholder guests. Guests must be in the same vehicle as the sponsor. Call 295-7577.

Military and Family Life Counselors

Military and Family Life Counselors address a variety of issues such as stress, anxiety and deployment. MFLCs are licensed mental health professionals who provide situational, problem-solving counseling anonymously and confidentially. No written records are kept, and it is

free to military and family members. Contact a MFLC at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston at 517-6666 general number, 243-4143 for Army students, and 488-6804 for Air Force and Navy students; at JBSA-Lackland, call 540-5025 or 540-5030 for adults, 627-0054 or 540-5033 for children and youths; and at JBSA-Randolph, call 627-1223 or 426-1412 for adults, 627-0338 or 627-0525 for children and youths.

Spouses' Club of Fort Sam Houston Area

The Spouses' Club of the Fort Sam Houston Area has a variety of events coming up such as monthly luncheons, community outreach and fun activity clubs like Bunko, a book club and bingo. The club is open to all ranks, all military services and Department of Defense civilians. Call 705-4767.

OUTSIDE THE GATE

RecruitMilitary Job Fair

A hiring event for vet-

erans and military spouses takes place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday at the Norris Conference Center, 618 Northwest Loop 410. Job seekers can meet face to face with veteran-friendly local and national employers.

Warrant Officer Association Meeting

The January meeting of the Lone Star Silver Chapter of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Association is at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 19 at the Longhorn Cafe, 1003 Rittiman Road. All active duty,

retired, Reserve, National Guard warrant officers and family members of current or retired warrant officers are invited. Call 413-1965 or 257-0931.

Van Autreve Sergeants Major Association

The Sgt. Maj. Of the Army Leon L. Van Autreve Sergeants Major Association meets at 5 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the Longhorn Café, 1003 Rittiman Road. Active duty, Reserve, National Guard and retired sergeants major are

invited. Call 539-1178.

Enlisted Association

Chapter 80 of the Enlisted Association meets at 1 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the JBSA-Lackland Gateway Club. Call 658-2344.

Defense Department releases 2015 military pay, compensation rates

The Defense Department announced the 2015 military pay and compensation rates for service members Dec. 22, 2014, with most service members receiving a one percent increase in basic pay.

The new rates for basic pay, basic allowance for housing, basic allowance for subsistence and the cost of living allowance rates for the contiguous U.S. took effect Jan. 1.

Basic pay for service members will increase one percent, except for general and flag officers who will not see an increase in 2015.

BAH rates for service members in 2015 will increase on average \$17 per month, or 0.5 percent. Rates are calculated using median current

market rent and average utilities including electricity, heat, and water/sewer for each pay grade, both with and without dependents.

Two changes were made to BAH rate computations for 2015: renter's insurance, which contributed an average of one percent to rates, was eliminated, and the fiscal year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act reduced housing rates on average one percent for service members.

However, individual rate protection for service members remains an integral part of the BAH program. Even if BAH rates decline – including through the elimination of renter's insurance and the reduction in the calculated

rate – a service member who maintains uninterrupted BAH eligibility in a given location will not see a rate decrease. This ensures that service members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if local housing costs decrease.

Service members can calculate their BAH payment by using the BAH calculator at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>.

The 2015 BAS rates for military members will increase by 2.9 percent over last year. The new rates are \$367.92 per month for enlisted members and \$253.38 per month for officers.

The annual adjustments to BAS – a



U.S. Air Force photo

The new rates for basic pay, basic allowance for housing, basic allowance for subsistence and the cost of living allowance rates for the contiguous United States took effect Jan. 1.

monthly nontaxable cash payment to military members intended to be used to buy food – are linked to changes in food prices as measured by the annual change in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cost of Food at Home Index. From the beginning of October 2013 through the end of

September 2014, the index rose by 2.9 percent, forming the basis for the increased BAS rates.

The DOD also released its 2015 CONUS COLA rates. Roughly 12,000 members will see a decrease in their CONUS COLA payments, while some 7,000 members will see an increase or

no change and 4,000 members will no longer receive a CONUS COLA payment.

CONUS COLA is a taxable supplemental allowance designed to help offset higher prices in high-cost locations, and rates vary based on location, pay grade, years of service and dependent status.

Rates can increase or decrease depending on the prices in a specific duty location compared to prices in an average CONUS location.

Service members can calculate their allowance by using the CONUS COLA calculator at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/conusCalc.cfm>.

(Source: DOD News, Defense Media Activity)

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