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A PUBLICATION OF THE 502nd AIR BASE WING – JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON



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U.S. Army South hosts conference with state partners, adjutants



Photo by Robert Ramon

Acting Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy spoke to U.S. Army South's adjutant general conference participants during his visit to Fort Sam Houston Jan. 20-21. Murphy received a briefing on the State Partnership Program and command brief on U.S. Army South's mission and operation. Army South hosted the conference to synchronize efforts with Army National Guard partner states and Army National Guard Bureau in support of U.S. Southern Command's State Partnership Program.

By Sgt. Mahlet Tesfaye
 U.S. Army South Public Affairs

More than 75 participants gathered at the Fort Sam Houston Mission Training Complex Jan. 20-21 for an adjutant general conference

The conference included adjutants and assistant adjutants generals and command sergeants major representing 17 states, State Partnership Program directors, representatives from U.S. Southern Command, Air Force and Navy, as well as 10 Army

section chiefs stationed at partner nation countries and U.S. Army South staff.

Army South hosted the conference in order to synchronize its efforts with the National Guard partner states and National Guard Bureau in support of the U.S. Southern Command's State Partnership Program.

"We have great relationships with a lot of countries because of the State Partnership Program," said Maj. Gen. K.K. Chinn, Army South commanding general during his opening remarks. "This

conference is about collaboration, strengthening our relationship, and integrating and synchronizing our resources to support the SPP's mission."

The U.S. Army National Guard's State Partnership Program has been successfully building relationships with partner nation forces for more than 20 years through military-to-military engagements to support defense and security cooperation around the world.



Searching for the secret to promotion

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By Army Master Sgt.
Jamie K. Price
Department of the Army Secretariat

When it comes to military advancement, the questions abound – why wasn't I selected for promotion? What must I do to be competitive? Is it whom you know that will get you promoted? Why is my cutoff score so high? What makes them better than me?

These are common questions enlisted Soldiers ask their supervisors, organizational leadership and mentors to get a better understanding of how the promotion system works. Unfortunately, everyone will have a different perspective.

That's because the abundance of variables factoring into promotion can seemingly leave no clearly defined path for selection at certain levels. That complexity spurs conspiracy theorists, fiction writers and anyone else to voice

their opinion on how the "system" works.

Though the Army has changed the selection process for junior and senior NCOs in many ways during the past 15 years, transparency has always been a goal of the Army's senior leaders. The force has tried to give its No. 1 resource – the Soldier – a treasure map to success. However, poor dissemination and improper interpretations of the information consistently cloud Soldiers' view of this map.

Enlisted cutoff scores are a mystery to many Soldiers. The confusion is evident on various social media websites. One will illustrate the Soldiers' frustration with how high one career field's score is while another site expresses joy with how low the score is. Do we as Human Resource professionals understand how the score is calculated? What avenues have been taken to educate our Soldiers?

Cutoff scores to sergeant or staff sergeant vary depending on the Army's readiness needs at the time the cutoff score is being published. Soldiers may look in their current command and realize their unit is short of people at certain grades, and they may not understand why the Army is choosing not to promote.

The basics of junior NCO promotions are:

- 1.) A Soldier has to make the cutoff score.
- 2.) Points are updated through the Promotion Point Worksheet, or PPW.
- 3.) A certain level of Structured Self Development, or SSD, is required for each promotion.
- 4.) A Soldier under a suspension of favorable actions or barred from reenlistment cannot be considered for promotion.
- 5.) A Soldier must have at least 12 months in service remaining if being promoted to staff sergeant.

While most of this is accepted, Soldiers may not understand the intense level of detail that goes into establishing a cutoff score. It is a system designed to help the Army maintain balance within skill sets to carry out the Army's extremely diverse mission. Evaluation, Selections and Promotions Division is the face of promotions to Soldiers in the Army.

Soldiers may also not know that their career branch, enlisted Force Alignment Division, or FAD, and the office of the Director of Military Personnel Management, or DMPM, all play a role in how the Army promotion system works.

These departments receive input about the Army's current inventory, authorizations, projected gains and losses, Military Occupational Specialty conversions, force structure changes, DMPM allocations based on the Army's budget, etc.

This input is used by

U.S. Army Human Resources Command to set the cutoff score. HRC optimizes readiness by developing the force and promoting Soldiers to sergeant and staff sergeant in the fields in which they are needed.

Readiness dictates how high or low the sergeant or staff sergeant cutoff score is set but the Army doesn't prevent Soldiers from striving for promotion. If a Soldier puts in the hard work and dedication toward maxing out his or her MOS's cutoff score, the Army recognizes it by selecting the Soldier for promotion.

Understanding junior-level promotions is comparatively simple. The majority of confusion and questions enters at the senior level.

Promotion paths to sergeant first class, master sergeant and sergeant major are not as clearly defined.

See PROMOTION, P9

Military participation needed for health survey

The Department of Defense needs input from military members on issues that directly affect the health, well-being and readiness of military members and families by participating in the Health Related Behaviors Survey that will inform the Department of Defense of potential health problems in the military community.

"Your participation in the 2015 HRBS is critical to assessing health-related

readiness," said Air Force Deputy Assistant Secretary John Fedrigo. "I hope you will choose to support this vital effort."

The 40-minute survey is voluntary for active components and Coast Guard members.

Some personnel will be randomly selected to complete an anonymous health review via email and mail invitation. Members can complete the survey on any computer with Internet

capability and should be accurate and honest as possible about diet, exercise, stress, substance use and alcohol.

The DOD conducts the anonymous HRBS every three years to get a comprehensive update about the health behaviors of military members.

No personal identifiers on this survey will be asked, however, this questionnaire will be linked to survey participation.

"Through this anonymous survey, information obtained is used to ensure we are providing the right kinds of guidance on services, programs, and support essential to maintaining a ready force which can be deployed at a moment's notice," said Dr. Jonathon Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs and the TRICARE Management Activity director.

Members are asked to complete the questionnaire at <http://www.DoD-2015HealthSurvey.com>. To protect a member's privacy, any uncompleted surveys will need to start over from the beginning. A summary report of the results will be posted to the DOD website as soon as it's finalized.

(Source: Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Command Information)



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News Briefs

JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Black History Month Event

The Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Black History Month commemoration is planned for noon Wednesday at the Fort Sam Houston Theater, hosted by Brooke Army Medical Center. Bexar County Commissioner Tommy Calvert is the guest speaker.

Basura Bash 2016

The 6th Annual Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Basura Bash will be held at JBSA-Sam Houston's Salado Creek Park from 9 a.m. to noon Feb. 20, with volunteer check-in at 8 a.m. and a safety briefing at 8:45 a.m. The annual cleanup of Salado Creek is held in conjunction with the broader city-wide cleanup effort for the tributaries of the San Antonio River. Volunteers are encouraged to wear long pants, sturdy shoes, gloves, hat, sunscreen and can bring their own cleanup gear, such as waders, trash-grabbers, nets, etc. Trash bags will be provided. All participants under 18 must have a parent or guardian onsite. All participants must have a government ID card or Common Access Card and sign a waiver to participate. Community service vouchers will be available. Volunteers can register online at <http://www.basurabash.org>. For more information, call 295-4724.

Weingarten rights: having union representation during investigatory interviews

The Labor Relations Statute entitles a bargaining unit employee to representation by the union during an examination, by an agency representative, in connection with a matter under official investigation if that employee reasonably believes disciplinary action will result. If the employee requests union representation, no further questioning will take place until a representative is present. For those stationed at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, call 808-0205; at JBSA-Randolph, call 652-4658 and at JBSA-Lackland, call 671-4528.

See NEWS BRIEFS, P6

Army North personnel train for hurricane response in North Carolina

By Sgt. First Class Wynn Hoke and Luis Deya
U.S. Army North Public Affairs

U.S. Army North's Defense Coordinating Officer/Element for the southeastern United States was put to the test Jan. 25-29 during a training exercise in North Carolina centered on hurricane response.

The DCO/E Region IV, named due to its alignment with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region IV, trained on assisting local, state and federal civilian authorities following a simulated landfall of a Category 4 hurricane on the Carolina coast.

In the scenario, several areas along the North Carolina coast were devastated by the storm and the notional governor requested federal and Department of Defense assistance to help with life-saving and life-sustaining operations to mitigate suffering in the storm-stricken areas.

The exercise, known as a CERTEX, was designed to certify and prepare the DCO/E for a potential deployment in real-world disaster situations. Region IV is comprised of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama, so the possibility of this DCO/E facing a similar scenario in the real world is very high.

"I want everyone involved to not only walk away with a better understanding of his/her job, but also gain a broader understanding



Photo by Sgt. First Class Wynn Hoke

More than 50 joint military personnel that comprise the Defense Coordinating Element for Region IV work in the tactical operations center during the Certification Exercise for Defense Coordinating Officer Jan. 25-29 in Raleigh, N.C.

of what Defense Support to Civil Authorities entails and the various stakeholders in a given scenario," said Col. John Thompson, Region IV defense coordinating officer.

The CERTEX brought together more than 50 personnel from nine states plus U.S. Army North headquarters personnel from Fort Sam Houston to ensure the future success of the Region IV DCO/E as well as foster positive relationships between FEMA and the eight state emergency preparedness liaison officers assigned to the eight states within Region IV.

"As natural disasters or man-made disasters become more complex and resources get constrained we need to come together as a collaborative group effort to provide the support necessary," said Army Col. Jonathan Simmons, Alabama EPLO. "We need to be able to provide the best assistance to American citizens."

U.S. Army North's Task Force 51 also de-

ployed to North Carolina and trained on the same scenario less than a mile away from the DCO/E exercise.

While the DCO/E Region IV personnel focused on being DoD's "eyes and ears" in a multi-agency, civilian-led emergency operations center, Task Force 51 trained on serving as the forward command post for the Joint Forces Land Component Command. Similar to the DCO/E's CERTEX, coordination with civilian officials was a critical component of TF-51's exercise.

"This type of exercise allows us to build solid relationships with local, state and federal agencies and to better coordinate efforts," said Maj. David Briten, a TF-51 liaison and future operations planner. "It's an opportunity to help Americans in the homeland."

Staff Sgt. Michael Cucalon, an intelligence sergeant with Army North agreed, saying it is important to learn the different processes in training where the hu-

man lives in danger are only simulated.

"Each state does things differently, but we all have the same goal and that is to save lives," Cucalon said. "I am proud to have this mission because I get to serve and help those in need, which could one day include my own friends and family"

Bringing the collective team together helped ensure everybody is on the same

page "to practice standard operating procedures and other tactics and techniques," Thompson said. "This CERTEX allows the team to learn innovative ways to conduct DSCA, which can be a much nuanced mission."

DCO/E Region IV certification will last the duration of Thompson's tenure. When he moves on, the new defense coordinating officer will have to recertify the DCO/E for Region IV.



Photo by Sgt. First Class Wynn Hoke

Col. John Thompson (left, front), Region IV defense coordinating officer, discusses active duty military forces mission assignments with his operations officer to support the state and federal response to a notional aftermath of a Category 4 hurricane that hit North Carolina.

IMCOM mentors, mentees seek 'lollipop moments'

By Jessica Ryan
U.S. Army Installation Management
Command Public Affairs

Karen Perkins, U.S. Army Installation Management Command human resources director, posed an intriguing question to 43 mentors and 36 mentees as they met in-person for the first time during the Headquarters Centralized Mentoring Program orientation Jan. 12 at the College of the Installation Management on Fort Sam Houston. "Did you know that you could have a big impact on someone's life without even realizing it,"

she asked before showing a video entitled "TEDx-Toronto – Drew Dudley 'Leading with Lollipops.'"

Dudley, the video's speaker, told a story about the remarkable impression he left on a college peer after he persuaded another student to give her a lollipop during a campus registration event.

"How many of you guys have a lollipop moment, a moment where someone said something or did something that you feel fundamentally made your life better?" Dudley said.

"We need to redefine leadership as being about

lollipop moments, how many of them we create, how many of them we acknowledge, how many of them we pay forward, and how many of them we say thank you for."

The command's mentoring program provides an opportunity for employees to find and give those lollipop moments. It is designed to build the bench for junior to mid-level civilian employees to become future leaders and future mentors that influence and shape the future workforce.

"The year-long program is comprised of unique developmen-

tal experiences," said Amanda Rodriguez of IMCOM G1's Workforce Development team. "It includes an orientation phase and a job-shadow week, then culminates in a group project capstone event – all of which are aimed at building a multi-skilled and adaptive workforce."

New to the program this year is an active-duty Soldier pairing, according to Perkins.

Sgt. Maj. Lon Culbreath, IMCOM G1 team member, agreed to mentor Sgt. 1st Class Sherri Queen, a detachment sergeant at U.S. Army Garrison Japan, after reviewing her application.

Although the program was initially opened to only civilian employees, the IMCOM G1 staff believed active duty Soldiers assigned to the command should participate.

"We all have a common mission to take care of Soldiers, Families and civilians," Culbreath said. "As we move forward into the future, it's important that we, as Soldiers and civilians, are integrated together."

Even though the pair are stationed in different countries, they plan to regularly communicate



Sgt. Maj. Lon Culbreath (left), U.S. Army Installation Management Command G1, poses with his mentee Sgt. 1st Class Sherri Queen (right), U.S. Army Garrison Japan, at the College of Installation Management at Fort Sam Houston Jan. 15. Throughout this year, Culbreath will guide Queen in developing her skill sets and career goals through regular communication, a week-long job shadowing experience and completion of the program's capstone project.

through phone and email.

Culbreath's focus will be developing Queen's promotion eligibility for her next grade. She hopes to eventually become a sergeant major like him.

"I think it's critical for senior noncommissioned officers to have a mentor who can show them the path to achieving their goals," Culbreath said. "There are certain steps that she needs to get done in order to accomplish those goals, and I'm excited to help her reach them."

In the year ahead, the mentors and mentees

will be seeking to give and receive those lollipop moments as they build a strong relationship which will hopefully last beyond the program.

"Although this is a year-long program, it doesn't mean that the mentor-mentee relationship ends then," Rodriguez said. "Mentoring can last a lifetime."

For more information about the Headquarters Centralized Mentoring Program, contact the IMCOM G1 Workforce Development at usarmy.jbsa.imcom-hq.list.g1-workforce-development-owner@mail.mil.



Photos by Jessica Ryan

During the Headquarters Centralized Mentoring Program orientation's last day Jan. 15, mentees were grouped into teams and briefed senior leaders at U.S. Army Installation Management Command on their project ideas and plans.

BAMC celebrates legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

Brooke Army Medical Center commemorated the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Jan. 22 with a ceremony held in the San Antonio Military Medical Center Medical Mall.

“There is a lot going on in San Antonio, in Texas and the United States right now and I really appreciate the opportunity we have to take a few minutes to think about the theme behind all of it,” said Brooke Army Medical Center Commander Col. Evan Renz, reflecting on the year’s theme for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

“I love this year’s theme of ‘Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not a Day Off!’ It’s a fantastic message for all of

us to think about,” Renz added.

The guest speaker for the event was retired Army Chaplain (Col.) Edward Maney, chief of the Casualty Assistance Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. Maney was the first African-American chaplain at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston.

Maney praised King’s courage and spoke about how his iconic “I Have A Dream” speech brought people together in a common cause.

“There were those in America who stood up and understood what Martin Luther King stood for,” Maney said. “It wasn’t just black America, it was white America and it was Mexican-Americans who marched with him and Asians that walked with him. Churches united



Photo by Ed Dixon

Brooke Army Medical Center Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight Wafford (left) gives retired Col. Edward Maney a certificate of appreciation for speaking at Brooke Army Medical Center’s Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration ceremony Jan. 22 at the San Antonio Military Medical Center Medical Mall, as BAMC Commander Col. Evan Renz (right) looks on.

with him because they all knew America could be better.”

He told the service members in the audience to hold their heads high.

“Give it your all,” Maney said. “Because the America you fight for is still evolving. America remembers those of us who have enough heart

to believe that we can be better.

“It’s not an America of any one particular class, creed or race,” Maney added. “It’s an America

for all human beings who wish to feel whole and a part of something bigger than themselves. That’s what America stands for.”

News Briefs

Continued from P3

Check Your Military, CAC, Dependent ID Expiration Dates Now

All Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting system, Command Access Card and military ID card locations throughout Joint Base San Antonio are by 100 percent appointment only and wait time for an appointment can be up to 30 days. Civilian and military members need to remember their CACs and military IDs expire and schedule renewal appointments appropriately. Plan ahead for your family members for when their ID cards or and Defense Enrollment Eligibility System updates need to be made. Appointments can be made online at <https://rapids-appointments>.

Army Candidate School Structure Interview Panel Board

The 502nd Force Support Squadron's Military Personnel Branch conduct a U.S. Army Officer Candidate School Structure Interview Panel Board at 8 a.m. April 27 at building 2263, 1706 Stanley Road, room 117B. All Soldiers must have a bachelor's degree and can't be over the age of 33. Soldiers must also be U.S. citizens, have a general technical score of 110 or higher on the U.S. Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test, a security clearance and cannot have more than six years active federal service. Soldiers are also required to have a Department of the Army photo or photo in Army Combat Uniform. Do not apply if you are on assignment or scheduled to deploy. For a complete listing and checklist of the OCS requirements and forms, visit <https://www.hrcapps.army.mil/site/protect/branches/officer/Operations/Accessions/OCS/index.htm>. All OCS applicants must see their S1/G1 prior to submitting their OCS packets. All OCS packets must be turned in by April 8. For more information, call 221-0885.

U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center sets new patient admittance record in 2015

By Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center at Fort Sam Houston set a new record in 2015 with the most patients being admitted in a calendar year. In 2015, there were 819 patients admitted to the Burn Center. The previous record was set in 2012 at 793.

Burn Center Director Col. (Dr.) Booker T. King confirmed the number, stating that 30 patients were military service members – including two from Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan – while 43 were Department of Defense beneficiaries and the remainder of the patients were civilians from the South Texas region.

Collocated at the San

Antonio Military Medical Center, the USAISR Burn Center is the sole burn unit for the DOD and the largest burn center in Texas. Since 2003, 992 combat burn casualties and more than 4,500 civilians have been treated by approximately 300 medical professionals.

According to King, treating burn patients is a complex process and it is essential for burn care providers to maintain their proficiency to care for service members and civilian patients.

"Every time that I have deployed to a combat zone the majority of the patients were civilians," he said.

King added that maintaining skills is necessary in order to save lives during wartime. The burn center staff provides pre-deployment training to combat care



Photo by Steven Galvan

U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center staff prepare a patient for a surgical procedure.

providers.

"For some this is their first exposure to critically burned and injured Warriors," King said. "We are also important to the military because of the combat casualty

care research that we conduct for the battlefield wounded.

"We are an important combat skills sustainment platform. We have to stay engaged in burn care treatment to

maintain that skill. It's not like a switch that you can turn on and off," King added. "No one knows when or where the next big conflict is going to be, but we have to be ready."

Travel reimbursement changes in effect

Changes made to the Joint Travel Regulation affect every traveler in the Department of Defense, according to 502nd Comptroller Squadron officials.

Effective since Nov. 1, 2014, members on temporary duty status can no longer claim ATM fees, laundry and baggage carrier tips.

Other changes include:

- Flat rate per diem has been implemented for long-term TDYs.
- The Defense Travel Management Office has mandated travelers utilize the Defense Travel System (<http://www.defensetravel.osd.mil/dts/site/index.jsp>) to book any lodging at govern-

ment and commercial facilities.

- At certain Continental United States locations, government lodging is required for civilian as well as military members.

- Members on long-term TDY will be reimbursed per diem and lodging at a flat rate. If going TDY to the same location for 31 to 180 days, members are authorized a flat rate of 75 percent of the max lodging and per diem. If TDY is more than 180 days, members are limited to a flat rate of 55 percent of the lodging and per diem rate. Stays more than 30 days in the commercial

lodging industry are considered extended stays and the costs for these accommodations are commonly reduced. If the commercial ticket office is unable to find suitable lodging at the reduced rate, members may be entitled to an actual expense allowance.

Effective since Sept. 1, 2015, travelers on TDY assignments utilizing DTS are required to book all hotel accommodations through DTS. This includes government and commercial lodging.

To provide better security, safety and reduced rates, the DOD has launched the integrated lodging pilot program. This program

requires mandatory use of government lodging for military members and civilian employees at the following locations: Charleston S.C.; Dayton, Ohio; Fort Lee, Va.; Norfolk, Va.; Hampton Roads, Va.; Newport News, Va.; Suffolk, Va.; Quad City, Ill.; Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; Seattle-Tacoma Airport Area, Wash.; Tampa, Fla; and Twentynine Palms, Calif. These locations are updated regularly and can be referenced on the DTMO website at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil>.

The Defense Travel System has been updated to support these new initiatives. When book-

ing lodging in DTS, if government lodging is not available, the system will auto-generate a non-availability letter. This added convenience will save travelers time by reducing extra coordination needed when booking hotel accommodations.

For more information, contact the 502nd Comptroller Squadron office at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston at 221-0056, at JBSA-Lackland at 671-1851 or JBSA-Randolph at 652-1851. These changes can also be seen at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil>.

(Source: 502nd Comptroller Squadron)

Memorial ceremony honors METC Sailor

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

Service members and civilians from the Navy, Army and Air Force gathered at the Medical Education and Training Campus on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Jan. 25 for a celebration of life memorial for a Sailor who passed away Dec. 28, 2015.

Twenty-three-year-old Seaman Nenit Coltra worked at METC, the joint military medicine education command whose Navy service component is Navy Medicine Training Support Center, or NMTSC. The young Sailor worked among very senior leadership, both active duty and civilian, where co-workers said she excelled greatly.

“She was assigned to us as a clinical care coordinator in the division and she brought immense energy to the office,” said Navy Capt. Richard Hagerty, her supervisor at METC. “She was routinely tasked with the most challenging assignments, but she did them with pure joy.”

Others who worked closest with her spoke during the ceremony about fond memories of their time together. Her



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Jacquelyn D. Childs

Senior Navy and Air Force personnel bow their heads during the benediction at a celebration of life memorial ceremony Jan. 25 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. The ceremony was held to remember Seaman Nenit Coltra, who worked at the Medical Education and Training Campus before she passed away Dec. 28, 2015, at 23 years old.

senior leadership also shared their thoughts to everyone in attendance.

“There always seems to be unanswered questions at times like this, especially when we lose somebody close to us in our Navy family, in our METC family,” said Navy Capt. Denise Smith, NMTSC commanding officer. “Gathering together today and celebrating this life will hopefully help us come closer to her and bring closure to us. We will not forget her, but rather we will humbly remember her.”

Along with leaders and co-workers from NMTSC and METC were her lead-

ers and friends at the Defense Medical Readiness and Training Institute, or DMRTI, where she worked prior to moving to METC.

“We’re proud of her service and proud of her professionalism,” Hagerty said. “Her short life will not lack in influence, which she left on myself and others around her. I know all of us will remember her for living her life fully.”

The event included a ceremonial flag-folding while Taps was played. The flag and a recording of the ceremony will be presented to Coltra’s family.

Retired general who served under Fifth Army in World War II laid to rest

By Sgt. Maj. Matt Howard
Army North Public Affairs

Retired Army Brig. Gen. Michael E. Leeper, who served under Fifth Army in World War II, was laid to rest at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery Jan. 19.

Leeper, who retired from the Army in 1971 after 30 years of service, passed away in December 2015 at the age of 98.

He received full military honors provided by more than 50 Soldiers from Fort Sam Houston's Military Funeral Honors unit and the 323rd Army Band.

Brig. Gen. Pete Bosse, U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) deputy commanding general for Reserve Affairs, was the senior officer present and presented the American flag from the ceremony to



Photo by Edward Dixon

The Fort Sam Houston Caisson Platoon transports the remains of retired Brig. Gen. Michael E. Leeper to Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery Jan. 19. Leeper passed away in December 2015 at the age of 98.

Leeper's family.

Leeper enlisted in the Army shortly in April 1941 and was commissioned as a quartermaster officer the following summer. In 1944, he

deployed overseas with the 255th Ordnance Battalion, which supported Fifth Army combat operations in Italy.

After the war, he held numerous logistician and

budgetary positions in the Army, rising through the ranks and ultimately attaining the rank of brigadier general in 1969.

As a general officer, Leeper served as the

director of procurement and production and director of international logistics for Army Materiel Command.

His final assignment before retiring was

Eighth Army Assistant chief of staff for logistics (G4) in Korea. Following his Army service, Leeper held multiple executive positions for corporations in Hawaii.

PROMOTION from P2

Simple eligibility criteria such as time in service, time in grade and educational requirements are articulated in the message announcing a selection board.

Army Regulation 600-8-19 gives a brief overview of how the selection board is set up, but the question now is: What's next? What information does the board consider in selection or non-selection? What is the gauge for measuring a record? Are Soldiers compared to one another?

Board members are selected because of their experience in their respective career fields as defined by the DMPM and divided into panels that cover those fields. Each panel has three or more members consisting of sergeants major, command sergeants major and a colonel in the same field. They're charged with selecting the best qualified Soldiers for promotion based on demonstrated leadership, effectiveness and potential.

During the board process, candidates are scored from 6 to 1 based on an evaluation of the Soldier's MyBoard File. A 6 represents superior performance with potential for promotion

and continued service, and is a score usually assigned to a select few. A score of 1 shows unsatisfactory performance and little to no potential for continued service.

The MyBoard File consists of board correspondence, the Soldier's official photo, Enlisted Record Brief, performance, education and training, records and a commendatory section of the Soldier's Army Military Human Resource Record, or AMHRR.

But what makes the board member give a certain score? This is where the selection process enters the "unknown zone."

When a selection board begins, the board recorders assigned to the Department of the Army Secretariat brief the board members on the requirements set by the Memorandum of Instruction, or MOI. The MOI provides administrative instructions identifying zones of consideration, special skill requirements and board procedures, and outlines selection board authority.

This is what's referred to as the "left limit" of the board members' voting philosophy. The "right limit" is the board members' leader experience.

Each board member is given information explaining the career paths of MOSs being consid-

ered in their particular panel, along with Army regulation updates for MOS changes provided by DMPM. Board members then evaluate candidates' MyBoard file and score them based on this information.

The board members receive candidate files in random order, limiting the number of voters evaluating the same record at any given time. Board members cannot discuss files as they evaluate candidates within their panel. Any questions about a candidate's file are addressed to and answered by the board recorders.

There is no specific panel standard that states criteria for a certain score. A board member may use personal knowledge of the individual in scoring a candidate's file but may not share that information with the board.

After board members within a panel score all candidates in their panel, these scores are combined to give the candidate a total score. For example, if four panel members score a candidate with a 6, the candidate has a total score of 24.

All candidates of a particular MOS are rank-ordered, creating an order of merit list set by their total score. The best-qualified-for-



Photo by Army Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson

Sgt. Quintin Steeves (right) addresses the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) promotion board at the Vernon T. McGarity Army Reserve Center in Coraopolis, Pa., December 2014.

promotion line is drawn based on the number of required promotions of an MOS and grade to meet the readiness needs of the Army.

But what earns Soldiers a certain score? Opinions vary. Army leadership maintains that certain assignments and experiences are necessary to be selected for promotion. As Soldiers reference their career maps and requirements outlined in Army regulations they need to understand that many Soldiers have achieved the same benchmarks.

What makes one Soldier better than another?

Most believe that it is the individual's performance in key jobs. Soldiers are taught if they

do what is required of them to the best of their ability, everything will work out. That may get them on target for the next rank, but it may not be enough.

A Soldier's performance must be articulated through evaluations in such a way that it is evident or established that they are capable of serving at the next level. This is where the conspiracy theorists and fiction writers begin the tales of "whom you know" and many other falsehoods. Approximately 90 percent of all senior NCOs receive "Among the Best" and a 1/1 rating for promotion and potential in their evaluation reports. This is where the job of scoring a Soldier's record

becomes difficult.

Our society is in the "Information Age," making it easier than ever to get information distributed to the masses. This is great in many respects; however, our wish to share information has led to a decrease in originality.

When board members score records, they routinely view the same ratings or wording on multiple evaluations given – outstanding becomes average. The only thing a board member has to score record is what is annotated in the AMHRR. This means the Soldier's entire record must contain information that clearly distinguishes him or her from anyone else within

See PROMOTION, P10

Close Observation Bay fills gaps between Burn Intensive Care Unit, progressive care

By Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs

A few days after having a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the new Close Observation Bay at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center Progressive Care Unit at Fort Sam

Houston, burn patients were admitted to put the new capability into action.

The new observation bay will be overseen by two nurses around the clock and will serve as a step-down unit for the Burn Intensive Care Unit, where patients will

be closely monitored and provided care when needed.

Andrew Wallace said, the PCU assistant officer in charge, the COB is designed for burn patients who require the most care and monitoring in the unit, but do not need to be admitted to the

Burn Intensive Care Unit.

"It means that we can keep the sickest patient in one location to be managed and cared for by a separate team of nurses," Wallace said.

Sixteen nurses from the PCU volunteered to be assigned full-time to the COB. Wallace also stated that the COB is not only beneficial to the patients but to the entire staff as well.

"The nurses in the COB will be able to provide more complex burn care and treatment that is not normally provided in the PCU thus increasing their knowledge and skillset," he said.

The other benefit is that nurses who are caring for the other patients in the PCU can concentrate on discharging patients and providing education to them and their families on burn care and treatment at home.

"This means that we can give them more information on how to adapt to their lives with



Photos by Steven Galvan

The new Close Observation Bay at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center Progressive Care Unit at Fort Sam Houston will be overseen by two nurses around the clock and will serve as a step-down unit for the Burn Intensive Care Unit, where patients will be closely monitored and provided care when needed.

their burns and show them how to care for their wounds," Wallace said. "We also let them know what they can expect in regards to the short and long term care for their injuries."

Wallace added that designing the COB was a team effort involving the burn center leadership and the PCU staff that will be an overall cost-

saving measure.

"It costs more for patients to stay in the BICU," Wallace said. "We're not only helping to keep costs down, but we're also helping patients transition into the PCU which shows progression. This lets them know that there's light at the end of the tunnel and they'll be going home soon."



U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center Progressive Care Unit Nurse Ashley Roman (left) and Capt. Mollie Christiansen (right), PCU officer in charge, cut a ribbon to open the new Close Observation Bay at Fort Sam Houston Jan. 8 as USAISR staff look on.

PROMOTION from P9

the career field.

Evaluations that articulate the Soldier's importance to his or her assigned organizations and the Army, academic reports showing the Soldier is among the top few in his or her field, a DA photo showing your attention to detail and military bearing is the next hurdle in getting one closer to the coveted rank.

The last step is something over which Soldiers have no control – Army

readiness. Readiness will dictate whether one or one thousand can be promoted.

The Army's mission is: "to fight and win our nation's wars by providing prompt, sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict in support of combatant commanders."

Soldiers' records may receive perfect scores from every board member, but if they are limited by no requirements in their career field, the Army cannot

promote them.

As the Army's force structure changes to adapt to the evolving battlefield, requirements are created in some specialty MOSs and cut in others to meet the Army's needs. New career fields were created, such as 25D (cyber network defender), 29E (electronic warfare specialist) and 51C (contracting NCO), where historically there was not a requirement.

Other career fields were forced to release NCOs by using force alignment tools such

as the Qualitative Service Program which means that if the Army has no requirement for that MOS, then there is no opportunity for promotion.

The question of "what must I do to get promoted?" is different for every Soldier. The first step is the Soldiers' responsibility: They must be willing to accept challenging assignments, perform their duties to the best of their ability and ensure their exceptional performance is articulated specifically in their evaluations.

Next, they should make sure the rest of their records reflect their abilities. Their ERBs and DA photos must reflect the attention to detail that demonstrates the Soldiers' potential.

The final step to being selected is patience. Soldiers' careers are built over time. Selection for promotion to sergeant or staff sergeant may be credited to personal accomplishment, but promotions to senior grades are attributed to an overall view of Soldiers' careers as re-

flected in their AMHRR.

A career takes time to develop, just as the Army takes time to change. It's important to understand that many people have the same goals with similar paths. The number of candidates makes promotion extremely competitive. It takes hard work and timing. A Soldier's personnel record is the tool used by the Army's leadership to select its future leaders. That record and the Army's readiness needs are the driving force to promotion.

Clinic gives advice on managing cold, flu symptoms

By Robert Goetz
JBSA-Randolph Public Affairs

As flu season continues toward its wintertime peak, military health care professionals are reporting a sharp increase in the number of patients complaining of colds and flu-like symptoms.

The good news is that most patients are suffering from colds, not influenza, said Capt. (Dr.) John Lax, 359th Medical Operations Squadron family physician at the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Family Care Clinic.

"In the week leading up to Thanksgiving, we started seeing more people with flu-like symptoms, but most of them had colds," he said. "We haven't seen a lot of flu cases so far. Last year there were a lot of flu cases, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said there's been good coverage from this flu season's vaccine."

Lax said colds and influenza share some symptoms, but the flu is distinguished by body aches and a high-spiking fever – 102 degrees

Fahrenheit for higher for adults 18 and older.

"Without a fever or body aches, it is unlikely you have the flu," he said. "They are the most common symptoms and normally start first."

Other flu symptoms are coughing, runny nose, sinus pressure and headaches.

Lax said many people think they have the flu because of their symptoms, but colds typically start out differently than influenza.

"Colds start with a sore throat and a runny nose," he said.

Other cold symptoms include a low-grade fever, cough, fatigue, sinus pressure, headaches, post-nasal drip, and eye irritation and redness.

Lax said colds and the flu are caused by viruses, but again there is a difference.

"Colds can be caused by more than 100 different types of viruses, but the flu is caused by only two viruses, which is why a vaccine can be made for it," he said.

Patients who have flu-like symptoms should be evaluated if they have

underlying heart or lung problems, have recently had an overnight stay in a hospital, have one-sided sinus pain, or their symptoms have continued beyond 10 days, since viral infections typically run their course in seven to 10 days, Lax said.

"There is unfortunately nothing we can do to speed up that course other than recommend resting and allowing yourself to recover," he said. "Regardless if it's a cold or the flu, people will get better over time. Your body will fight infection."

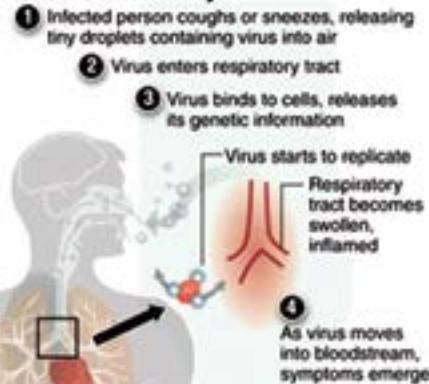
Most people can treat their symptoms accordingly at home, through rest and hydration; the use of decongestants, cough suppressants and pain relievers; and salt-water gargles and cool drinks for sore throat. Lax said rest and hydration are especially important.

"Hydration thins out secretions and allows them to drain," he said. "Since antibiotics don't work for viruses, you need to allow your body to do the work of fighting the infection for you, and this requires rest."

Is it the flu, or is it a cold?

Flu is often confused with the common cold, but flu symptoms typically develop more quickly and are more severe than those of a cold.

How the flu infects you



Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

© 2009 MCT

How to compare symptoms

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Head	Headache rare	Achy
Nose	Runny, sneezing	Stuffy sometimes
Throat	Sore	Sore sometimes
Chest	Severe or hacking cough	Dry cough; can become severe
Appetite	Normal	Decreased
Muscles	Fine	Achy
Onset	Slow	Sudden
Body temperature	Low or no fever, no chills	High fever (over 102°F), chills
Fatigue	Mild	Severe; can last two to three weeks

In some cases, a medication called Tamiflu can be used to treat people with the flu, especially those with medical problems such as heart, lung or kidney disease; the very young; and people 65 and older, Lax said.

"It will shorten your symptoms by about one and a half days, but you will recover from the flu if you take the medicine or not," he said.

Prevention is an important way to avoid colds or the flu, Lax said.

Measures that can

slow the spread of viruses include frequent thorough hand washing; keeping countertops, keyboards and other surfaces clean; using tissues when sneezing or coughing; and avoiding contact with people who have a cold or the flu.

For the flu, a yearly immunization is the best measure. According to the CDC, a flu vaccination can keep people from getting sick from the flu, help protect people who are at greater risk of getting seriously ill from the flu,

make the illness milder if one becomes sick and reduce the risk of more serious flu outcomes.

Lax said all JBSA clinics are still providing flu immunizations.

The clinic is also expediting the handling of cold and flu cases with a nurse-run section devoted to those cases, he said.

"We're making access available to people who may not have to be seen by a provider," Lax said. "We're able to triage patients and treat them according to the protocol."

Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center Urgent Care Clinic offers virtual check-in options

By Shannon Carabajal
59th Medical Wing Public Affairs

Need quick access to urgent care? Thanks to new virtual check-in options at the 59th Medical Wing Urgent Care Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, patients no longer have to wait in the lobby for medical care.

The check-in options offer simple, convenient ways to join the line from home, office, or on the go, said Staff Sgt. Brett Biernbaum, a medical

technician with the urgent care center.

"When anyone is sick or has a medical concern, the last thing they want to do is wait for hours in a lobby with other people who are not feeling well. This program gives everyone the option to wait anywhere they choose," he said.

There are three ways to check in:

1. Visit <https://kiosk.qless.com/kiosk/app/home/17353> and enter the requested information.

2. Text the phrase "Lackland AFB UCC" to 960-8404 on any mobile device.

3. Download the QLess application to an android smartphone, find "Lackland AFB UCC" and join the line through the application. The application is currently not available for the iPhone.

Once patients have checked in, text notifications keep them informed about estimated wait times, their place in line and notify them when

their turn is coming up.

"You will be messaged when you have reached the front of the line," Biernbaum said.

Patients waiting in the queue can also request a status update or a time modification to let UCC staff know they will be arriving to the UCC later than expected. The current average wait time is 29 minutes and patients are out the door in less than an hour and a half.

Beneficiaries who have not checked in to

QLess before visiting the UCC are placed into the program by a technician when they arrive at the front desk.

"This will place them in line with those who have checked in virtually, allowing patients to leave and return when they have reached the front of the line," Biernbaum explained.

The UCC offers full-service, fast and safe care. It is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and provides walk-in care for

active-duty military, retirees and dependents over the age of 2. The center is an option for common acute minor medical problems when beneficiaries cannot obtain an appointment with a primary care provider or a clinic is closed.

Patients with a serious medical emergency should call 911 or seek medical care at the nearest emergency medical facility.

For more information about the UCC, call 292-7331.

Useful tools are available to access Army medicine from anywhere, any time

By Lori Newman
BAMC Public Affairs

The Army medical system offers some easy-to-use tools to help manage health care needs from home or while on the go.

“The Military Health System has developed several programs over the last few years that can assist you and your family in obtaining the medical care they need,” said Army Maj. Renee Zmijski, Brooke Army Medical Center Clinical Operations Division chief.

TRICARE Online is a useful tool available 24/7 from your computer or other internet capable device. Beneficiaries can find a doctor, refill a prescription or transfer enrollment to another military treatment facility.

“TRICARE Online is easy to use,” Zmijski said. “You can make, change or cancel a primary care appointment on the site within a few minutes.

“TRICARE Online also has a prescription refill option,” she said. “All you do is type your prescription numbers in the box, hit enter and wait to receive the date your prescription will be ready for pick up.”

TOL also will send appointment reminders via text message or email. To learn more about TOL, visit <http://tricareonline.com> for simple step-by-step instructions.

Using the Army’s Secure Messaging Service allows TRICARE benefi-

ciaries to directly contact their health care team via the internet.

“Secure Messaging is a great way to stay in touch with your primary health care provider,” Zmijski said. “I use it to request medication refills from my provider and to ask follow up questions after an appointment.”

The Secure Messaging website also has an extensive patient education library people can easily access from the comfort of their home. To learn more about Secure Messaging, visit <https://app.relayhealth.com>.

A third innovative tool for TRICARE beneficiaries is the Nurse Advice Line. This allows people to speak to a nurse anytime, day or night.

“The Nurse Advice Line is a great resource for getting general health questions answered or to get advice about your symptoms and what treatment options will work for you,” Zmijski said. “It’s simple and quick and you can also get information about caring for your child if they are ill.”

If the nurse recommends that the caller see a provider, then appointment services will be offered. To use the NAL, call 800-874-2273 and select option 1.

“These three tools can save people time and help them manage their military health care easily and conveniently,” Zmijski said.

MICC setting pace in contract closeout priority

By Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs

The implementation of metrics to measure the rate of closing out contracts coupled with holding contracting leaders in the field more accountable for the performance of that contract management step is allowing the Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Fort Sam Houston to lead the Army effort.

This data-driven approach has focused MICC contracting officers and contract specialists to make great strides in closing out both current and over-age contracts over the last two fiscal years that not only served to champion the Army Contracting Command effort but also captured the attention of Department of Defense acquisition officials in helping solve a problem that has plagued the department for years.

“An organization’s readiness is tied directly to its fiscal ability to acquire the contracted resources vital in carrying out its operations in support of the warfighter,” said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Gabbert, MICC commanding general. “Prioritizing contract closeout as an equally essential step in the contract lifecycle not only returns funding to our customers for use elsewhere but also lessens the administrative management that’s burdened our offices year after year.”

In a 2012 report to the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Armed Services on DOD contracting, the development of contract closeout data

and establishment performance measures by the military departments were among the recommendations from the Government Accountability Office to help reduce the backlog of over-age contracts. The audit, GAO-13-131, went on to identify the lack of an implementation plan by the Army following its announcement of a goal to close out more than 475,000 contracts by September 2014.

Annette Logan, a contract specialist at the command headquarters here, serves as the MICC Command Contracting Operations Metrics champion for contract closeouts. Contract closeout is among 18 indicators tracked by metrics that offer a snapshot of the command’s execution of fundamental, end-to-end contracting.

Implemented across the command in the second quarter of fiscal 2014, she said metric ratings performance is illustrated in red, amber or green, depending on the percentage of achievement, and shared throughout the organization to drive behaviors.

“We’ve made considerable progress, because our offices can now see the improvement they’re making,” Logan said. “However, we still have work to do.”

Rick Miller, procurement analyst at the MICC headquarters, said the command has closed out more than 72,500 current and over-age contracts valued at \$27 billion since the start of fiscal 2014. He added that the command had almost 55,000 over-age contracts for which it



Photo by Daniel P. Elkins

Pat Hogston, left, and Annette Logan review fiscal 2015 fourth quarter metrics for contract closeout Jan. 21 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The metrics capture the Mission and Installation Contracting Command’s success in accomplishing fundamental acquisition procedures. Hogston is the director of the MICC Contracting Operations Directorate, and Logan is the MICC metric champion for contract closeout.

was responsible to close at the start of fiscal 2014. Contracts are considered over age if they are not closed in accordance with procedures outlined in the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

“Since the start of fiscal 2014, the MICC has reduced over-age contracts from 54,953 to 24,022, a reduction of 30,931, or 56 percent,” Miller said.

The FAR governs the timelines for closing out contracts. For most simplified acquisitions, contracts are considered closed after the receipt of supplies or services and final payment. Fixed-priced contracts should be closed within six months after completion, and cost-type contracts should be closed within 36 months of the month in which the contracting officer receives evidence of physical completion.

The measure of MICC

contract closeouts is captured by a set of two metrics – one tracking contracts that were physically complete before Oct. 1, 2014, and a second, more aggressive metric for those completed on or after that date in order to prevent the sowing of contracts measured by the first metric.

“Contracting offices must achieve a 96-percent closure rate on contracts physically complete after Oct. 1, 2014, in order to meet the metric expectation,” Logan said, adding that most of the contracts completed before that date should be closed by the end of this fiscal year based on individual contract closeout plans submitted by the contracting brigades and field directorate office.

In addition to the implementation of metrics, the transfer of contracting office direc-

tors in pay plans at the direction of the command leadership placed greater accountability in the performance of meeting those metrics. Directors in the field were moved from the General Schedule pay plan to the DOD Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project, or AcqDemo, pay band in 2015.

“By being held more accountable for their metrics, there is greater incentive to achieve their goals,” Logan said.

AcqDemo was developed for the DOD acquisition community to enhance organizational effectiveness through an appraisal process that links contributions to salary. By aligning command metrics with performance objectives under the appraisal process, leaders responsible for the success of their respective contracting operations are encour-

aged to meet or exceed command expectations.

The increased accountability now tracked by metrics has led to a significant drop in over-age contracts, but that success is also driven by constant communication between the MICC headquarters and field contracting offices. Logan, who has been immersed in this effort for the past two years and took on the job as metric champion this fiscal year, said it has taken a cultural change throughout the organization.

“It’s been a challenge to get here,” she said. “To go from not having to focus on contract closeout as part of your recurring process to now it being placed in the forefront, it has been quite a challenge for some offices, but they are making considerable progress.”

She is engaged daily with the contracting support brigades, field directorate office and installation-level contracting offices, some of which have identified individuals to take on the responsibility of contract closeout at their respective levels. Logan identifies priorities on a list of over-age contracts that require the field’s attention that is incorporated into a weekly report.

“The reports allow contracting offices to see where they are at the end of every week,” Logan said. “We give them a list of contracts that we’re tracking at the headquarters level that need to be closed. As long as they close out what we’re tracking, they’re doing well.”

Joint Base San Antonio Recreation Park at Canyon Lake provides year-round outdoor activities for the family

By David DeKunder
JBSA-Randolph Public Affairs

From boating to hiking, the Joint Base San Antonio Recreation Park at Canyon Lake offers several year-round activities for JBSA members and their families to enjoy in a scenic setting.

The park is 52 miles north of San Antonio on 250 acres at Canyon Lake, which is managed by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and is open to active-duty service members and Department of Defense cardholders, including dependents, retirees and civilian employees.

JBSA Recreation Park at Canyon Lake General Manager Jonathan Clifton said the recreation area has camping, boating and lodging facilities, recreational vehicle parks, pavilions, picnic areas, hiking trails and beaches for JBSA members to use.

The recreation area provides a pristine lakefront with peace and solitude in the Texas Hill Country for JBSA mem-

bers and their families to enjoy, Clifton said.

Clifton said there are 81 lodging units to stay in and 18 pavilions and day use picnic areas. Pavilions can be rented out for work or family gatherings. There are two RV parks, with both full-service and electricity only sites, with restrooms, laundry facilities and dump stations available.

In addition, the park's Country Store provides food items, beverages, fishing gear and other items for purchase.

The recreation area has three lakefront beaches and two marinas, operated by the park.

Park patrons can rent ski, fishing, pontoon and paddle boats, canoes and kayaks at the Hancock Cove Marina or rent a slip at the Sunnyside Marina to store their boats.

Clifton said park users who want to rent a boat will need to show proof of having completed a boat safety course. Patrons who want to fish are required to have a fishing license. Fishing licenses can be purchased at the



Courtesy photo

The Joint Base San Antonio Recreation Park at Canyon Lake has three lakefront beaches and two marinas operated by the park. Park patrons can rent ski, fishing, pontoon and paddle boats, canoes and kayaks at the Hancock Cove Marina or rent a slip at the Sunnyside Marina to store their boats.

Country Store.

There are three miles of hiking trails in the park that provide scenic spots and opportunities for hikers to view wildlife, including deer, raccoons, foxes and birds.

The park sustained flood damage in May, mostly to the two marinas, a pavilion and from

debris, Clifton said. He said repairs are still being made to the marinas, but the marinas and other facilities are still open.

Clifton said the park is centrally located between San Antonio and Austin.

During the summer months, park users can go to nearby New Braunfels for tubing in the Guadalupe

River and to visit other attractions including historic Gruene and Schlitterbahn waterpark.

Reservations for camping, lodging and RV facilities should be booked in advance. To make reservations, call 800-280-3466. Active-duty service members can reserve facilities for up

to six months in advance; DOD cardholders for up to three months.

The park is open 365 days a year.

For information on lodging rates, boat rental and storage rates, pavilion rentals, park directions and hours, visit <http://www.myjbsa-fss-mwr.com>.

Service members should register and request absentee ballots now

Department of Defense personnel and their families who plan to vote by absentee ballot in the upcoming presidential primaries and the general election in November should complete a registration application and request their ballots now, according to a Federal Voting Assistance Program release.

To register and request ballots, complete the Federal Post Card Application

using the FPCA online assistant to fill out the form or pick up a hard-copy version from your voting assistance officer or nearest U.S. Embassy or consular office.

FVAP officials suggest completing a new application annually and with every move, or at least 90 days prior to the election.

State primary election dates are listed on the Federal Voting Assistance

Program's website (<http://www.fvap.gov/>), with registration information in a drop-down menu at the top left side of the home page.

To find your state's election website for specific information on candidates, elections, contact information and links to your local election office, visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program contact page at <http://www.fvap.gov/info/contact/>.

For more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program or help with the absentee voting process, visit the program's website at <http://www.fvap.gov/> or call 703-588-1584, toll free at 800-438-VOTE or via DSN at 425-1584. Help also is available by sending an email to vote@fvap.gov.

(Source: DOD News, Defense Media Activity)



Courtesy photo

Department of Defense experts to support HHS with Zika virus research

By Cheryl Pellerin
DOD News, Defense Media Activity

Department of Defense experts who have experience working with the Zika virus have been asked to support the Department of Health and Human Services in its efforts related to the mosquito-borne disease, the Pentagon press secretary said Jan. 27.

In a briefing with defense reporters, Peter Cook said the department has been asked to support HHS in its efforts to convene experts and stakeholders, specifically in the research area.

“This is an area where the DOD has done some research in the past,” he added, “I think some of that expertise will be brought to this effort. We’ll be supporting HHS in whatever way we can.”

Travelers to the United States from countries where mosquitoes carry the virus could bring the disease here, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a travel alert for people traveling to regions and countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing: Brazil, Colombia, El



Photo by Pete Souza

President Barack Obama convenes a meeting on the Zika virus in the White House Situation Room Jan. 26.

Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, Venezuela and Puerto Rico.

Local transmission of Zika virus has not been identified in the continental United States, CDC officials said, but limited local transmission, rather than widespread transmission, of Zika could occur.

Cook said Deputy Defense Secretary Bob

Work attended a meeting Jan. 26 that President Barack Obama convened at the White House with leaders of his health and national security teams.

Other attendees included Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Thomas Frieden, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National

Institutes of Health.

The experts discussed the spread of Zika and other mosquito-borne viruses in the Americas and steps being taken to protect the American public, according to a White House summary of the meeting.

CDC officials said Zika virus spreads to people through mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis, or red eyes.

The illness usually is mild, with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon, CDC officials said.

In May, the Pan American Health Organization issued an alert about the first confirmed Zika virus infection in Brazil. That outbreak, CDC officials said, led to reports of Guillain-Barre syndrome and women giving birth to babies with birth defects and

having “poor pregnancy outcomes.”

In response, CDC issued the travel alert.

Guillain-Barre is a rare disorder in which the immune system damages nerve cells, and CDC will conduct a study in Brazil to determine if a relationship exists between Zika virus infection and Guillain-Barre syndrome.

At the White House, the experts briefed Obama on factors that could affect the potential spread of Zika virus in the United States, and on travel advisories and guidance for domestic health care providers who care for pregnant women.

Obama also was briefed on the potential economic and developmental impacts of Zika virus spreading in the Western Hemisphere.

During the meeting, the White House summary said, Obama emphasized the need to accelerate research efforts to make better diagnostic tests available, to develop vaccines and therapeutics, and to make sure that all Americans have information about Zika virus and steps they can take to protect themselves from infection.

CLOSEOUT from P13

She added that most offices are headed in the right direction for tracking purposes, but some challenges related to a mix of staffing, workload and number of over-age contracts remain at a few of the command’s 32 contracting offices. Best practices from offices at Fort Drum, N.Y.; Fort Campbell, Ky; and Fort

Bliss, Texas, have been shared with other offices for possible implementation as an alternate solution.

As metric champion, Logan along with Miller are sharing the command’s approach to success as part of a contract closeout task force established by the Army’s deputy assistant secretary for procurement. While the DASAP(P) task force meets annually, information and

best practices are shared throughout the year with team members that also include stakeholders from the Medical Command, Army Contracting Command and Army Corps of Engineers.

As the number of over-age contracts are reduced, so too are the fiscal risks of unliquidated obligations for the Army. Pat Hogston, the director of the MICC Contracting Operations

Directorate, said this is critical for MICC-supported organizations.

“If unliquidated obligations are not taken care of prior to the funds expiring, then MICC-supported organizations must redirect current-year monies to satisfy those unliquidated obligations,” he said.

Hogston added that the closeout of over-age contracts accomplished by the command over

the last two years has eliminated approximately \$60 million in unliquidated obligations.

Funding provided to the Army is closed out on a five-year cycle by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

Headquartered on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, the MICC is made up of more than 1,500 military and civilian members responsible for

contracting for Soldiers. In fiscal 2015, the command executed more than 36,000 contract actions valued at more than \$5.2 billion across the Army, including \$2.25 billion to American small businesses. The command also managed more than 600,000 Government Purchase Card Program transactions in fiscal 2015 valued at an additional \$747 million.

Holiday Closures

The Military & Family Readiness Center is closed Feb. 15 in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday. For more information, call 221-2418 or 221-2705.

Closed For Training

The Military & Family Readiness Center is closed every first and third Thursday from 1-4:15 p.m. for in-service training. Call 221-2418 or 221-2705.

Post-Deployment

Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Service members scheduled to deploy, going on temporary duty assignment longer than 30 days or going on a remote assignment are required to attend this briefing. Call 221-2418.

Newcomer's orientation

Friday, 8 a.m. to noon, Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Mandatory in-processing briefing for all military and civilian personnel newly assigned to Joint Base San Antonio. Service members must coordinate with their unit personnel coordinator or commander support element. Spouses are welcome to attend; all patrons must be seated by 7:50 a.m. Call 221-2705.

EFMP Magik Theatre Trip

Friday, 6-7 p.m. and Saturday, 1-2 p.m., Magik Theatre 420 S. Alamo St. Exceptional Family Member Program families are invited to join us for a special showing of "Jack and the Beanstalk" on Friday and "Dr. Krashundbang" on Saturday at the Magik Theatre. Space is limited, registration required. All participants must arrive at least 15 minutes prior to show time. To reserve a seat or for more information, call 221-2705.

Employment Readiness Orientation

Mondays, 9-10 a.m. Military &

Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Learn about employment resources and review services offered. Call 221-2418.

Car Seat 101

Monday, 1-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Review the basics of car seat installation and make sure your child is seated properly within their car seat. This class is required before attending the Safety Seat Clinic. To register, call 221-2418.

TAP-Goals, Plans, Success (GPS)

Monday through Feb. 12, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Soldier for Life, building 2263. A mandatory five-day workshop for all service members separating from the military. The GPS workshop is facilitated by the Department of Labor, Veterans Administration and M&FRC. The "Pre-Separation Counseling" is a prerequisite before attending this class. For more information, call 221-1213.

Infant Massage

Monday, Wednesday, Feb. 17, 22 and 24, 9-10:30 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. This five-part series must be attended in order. Infant massage helps normalize muscle tone, improve blood circulation, stimulate brain development and improve sensory awareness. In addition, it may help with relieving discomfort from constipation, gas and colic allowing babies and parents to sleep better. Call 221-2418.

Army Pre-Separation

Tuesday-Friday, 8:30-11:30 a.m. Soldier for Life, building 2263. A mandatory counseling for all Soldiers separating from federal service. Begin the process 18 months prior to separation date. Call 221-1213.

Helping Us Grow

Securely Playgroup (HUGS)

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to noon, Middle School Teen Center, building 2515. An interactive playgroup for infants and toddlers; open to parents and their children, ages 5 and under. Registration not required. Call 221-2418.

Citizenship, Immigration Assistance, Naturalization

Tuesday, 9 a.m. to Noon, Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Review American customs and cultures, or meet with a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service officer for assistance with applications. Eligible patrons will take the oath of allegiance at a naturalization ceremony beginning at 2 p.m. Feb. 23. Registration not required. For more information call 221-2705.

Peer-To-Peer Support Group

Tuesday, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Soldier & Family Assistance Center, building 3639. Caregivers have the opportunity to build a peer support network, share experiences and information with a safe place to talk. Lunch is provided after the morning session. Call 221-2705.

Accessing Higher Education (ACES)

Tuesday-Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Education Center, building 2408. A two-day track for service member with a Bachelor's degree in pursuit of higher education. Review education requirements and resources that may support personal goals. Call 221-1213.

General Resume Writing

Wednesday, 9-11 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Learn about the different resume formats and which one to use when writing a non-Federal resume. Get tips on how to effectively write summary statements, employment history and more. Call 221-2418.

Relocation, Overseas Orientation

Wednesday, 10-11 a.m. & 2-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Mandatory for personnel E-5 and below. Topics cover entitlement, shipment of household goods, emotional stressors of relocation, employment, and education. Only one session is needed. Call 221-2705.

VOYA Nomination Process

Wednesday and Feb. 17, 9-11 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Review

the new nomination form and learn how to submit a package for 2016. This workshop will review helpful tips in writing a winning nomination. Nominations submitted on forms from previous years will not be accepted as they are obsolete. In order for your volunteer to be considered for the 2016 VOYA, nominations must be submitted no later than Feb. 29. Call 221-2380.

Connecting Through Communication

Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Learn communication and relationship building skills to help foster connection in relationships at home and in the workplace. Call 221-2418.

EFMP: What Does It Mean To Me?

Wednesday, 1-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. This workshop is designed to explore how three pillars of the program (Medical, Human Resource, and Family Support) work and what each pillar offers to Exceptional Family Member Program sponsors and their families. Call 221-2705.

Step-Families 101

Thursday, 8 a.m. to noon, Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. This two-part series must be attended in order. Discuss changes in the family dynamics, evolving roles, and the joys that come from being a step-parent. Call 221-2418.

Spouse Information Fair

Thursday, 9 a.m. to noon, Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Meet with more than 20 local military agencies and learn about services offered. Registration not required. Call 221-2705.

Volunteer Advisory Counsel

Thursday, 9-10 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. A monthly meeting for agencies with volunteers to discuss current issues, share program plans, success and proposed events. Call 221-2705.

Pre-Deployment

Thursday, 1-3 p.m., Military &

Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Service members scheduled to deploy, go on a temporary duty assignment longer than 30 days or go on a remote assignment are required to attend this briefing. Call 221-2418.

Hearts Apart

Feb. 12, 3-7 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Hearts Apart patrons should register by Monday for the Valentine's Day event. Hearts Apart is a support group for military families of a deployed or geographically separated service member. To register, call 221-2418.

Single Parent Support Group

Feb. 12, 5-7 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Single parents to connect, share helpful resources, and ways to overcome challenges as a single parent. Call 221-2418.

Air Force Pre-Separation

Feb. 16, 9 a.m. to noon, Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Airmen planning to separate from the federal service must attend a mandatory counseling. Begin the process 18-months prior to your separation date. Call 221-2418.

Army FAP Unit Training

Feb. 16, 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Mandated unit family advocacy training in accordance with Army Regulation 608-18 regarding domestic and child abuse identification, reporting, and prevention. Other topics covered include the Lautenberg amendment, restricted/unrestricted reporting and transitional compensation program. Seating is limited; call to reserve seats for your unit. Reservations will be accepted up to two weeks in advance. Call 221-2418.

Briefer Trainer Course

Feb. 17, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. A professional development course designed to improve briefing skills and techniques. Students are required to give an eight-minute presentation as part of the course. Evaluations are provided to students by a master trainer. Briefer training

course modules include "Introduction to Effective Briefings," "Sharpening your Briefing Skills" and "Making the Briefing your Own." Call 221-2418.

Family Readiness Group Forum

Feb. 17, 11 a.m. to noon, Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. An open forum that provides networking and an opportunity to discuss issues, share lessons learned, facilitates questions and discussions. Call 221-2418.

Interviews, Dress For Success

Feb. 17, 9-11 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Take pride in your appearance and follow expected guidelines of what to wear and be prepared for your interview. Discover ways to make a connection. Call 221-2418.

Coffee Talk EFMP Support Group

Feb. 17, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. This Exceptional Family Member Program support group meets monthly for a casual dialogue to share helpful resources and ways to overcome challenges. Call 221-2705.

Sponsorship Application Training

Feb. 17, 2-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Mandatory training for military sponsors. Review roles and responsibilities of a sponsor. The Electronic Sponsorship Application & Training at <http://apps.militaryonesource.mil/ESAT> provides registration, training certificates, sponsorship duty checklist, newcomer needs assessment, welcome packet and links to important Department of Defense and service relocation websites. Call 221-2705.

Safety Seat Clinic

Feb. 18, 1:30-3:30 p.m., fire station, building 3830. Make sure your child is safe while traveling on the road by ensuring restraints are properly installed and fit the child appropriately. Child and vehicle must be present; parents

ARSOUTH from P1

Within the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility, 17 U.S. states have active partnerships with defense and security forces from 26 nations in the Caribbean, Central America and South America.

“Maj. Gen. Chinn has done an excellent job of reaching out and trying to build a network that helps us encompass all of the state partnerships and makes us stronger together,” said Brig. Gen. Harrison Gilliam, assistant adjutant general for West Virginia which partners with Peru.

The state partnership engagements focus on security cooperation,

humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, professional development, medical and engineering.

Maj. Gen. William Reddel, New Hampshire Adjutant General, believes the conference will allow him and the New Hampshire National Guard to better serve his partner nation of El Salvador, which he described as “the shining star for democracy in Central America.”

“The biggest thing for me is helping out our partner nation,” Reddel said. “This conference helps us coordinate our efforts with the limited amount of funds available to make it go further. This kind of coordination will make it happen.”

Attendees were seated

according to the U.S. Southern Command regional area of operation in order to facilitate dialogues that allowed the participants to focus on regional situations during their discussions.

During the conference, participants from every region shared upcoming events and engagements with their respective partner nations and had deep discussions on how they can collaborate their efforts to plan and execute to accomplish the mission.

Gilliam admitted he learned a few things from his state counterparts about the different engagements he would like to incorporate within his state’s partner nation engagements.

“The most important

thing I learned from the conference is how other states are inviting their partner nations to participate in different competitions like the ‘Best Warrior Competition’ and I think that is a good idea we can take back and maybe incorporate that type of activity with our Peruvian partners,” Gilliam said.

Acting Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy spoke to the adjutant general conference attendees during his visit to Fort Sam Houston. Murphy discussed the State Partnership Program with U.S. Army South and the adjutant generals and received a command brief on U.S. Army South’s mission and operation.



Warrant Officers Meeting

The Lone Star Silver Chapter of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Association meets at 5:30 p.m. Monday at the Longhorn Cafe, 1003 Rittiman Road. All active duty, retired, Reserve and National Guard warrant officers and their families are welcome. Call 571-4967.

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. All active duty, Reserve, National Guard and retired sergeants major are invited. Call 539-1178.

Army Officer Candidate School Alumni Reunion

The Army Officer Candidate School Alumni Association has announced a 75th U.S. Army Officer Candidate School Diamond Anniversary celebration and reunion April 24-28 at the Double Tree Hotel, 5321 Sidney Simmons Blvd., in Columbus, Ga. The association represents all Army officers commissioned through the Officer Candidate School, regardless of previous school locations and branches. Demonstrations and briefings related to OCS, tours, a grand opening of the remodeled Wigle Hall, Memorial/Monument Walk, OCS Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, and Patterson Award dinner at the National Infantry Museum. For reservations, call 706-327-6868 and use “OCS Alumni Association Reunion 2016.” For more information, call 813-917-4309 or visit <http://www.ocsalumni.com>.

INSIDE from P16

will be seen by appointment only. Prerequisite class is “Car Seat 101.” Call 221-2418.

Pre-Deployment

Feb. 18, 9-11 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Service members scheduled to deploy, TDY longer than 30 days, or go on a remote assignment are required to attend this briefing. Call 221-2418.

Newcomer’s Orientation

Feb. 19, 8 a.m. to noon, Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Mandatory in-processing briefing for all military and civilian personnel newly assigned to JBSA. Service members must coordinate with their unit personnel coordinator or commander support element. Spouses are welcome to attend; all patrons must be seated by 7:50 a.m. Call 221-2705.

OPM Federal

Application Process

Feb. 17, 1-4 p.m., Soldier for Life, building 2263. Review the Federal employment process and careers offered within the Federal government. Learn about resources that support the Vet-

erans Employment Program, skill translators, resume builders, and more. Call 221-1213.

Citizenship, Immigration Assistance

Feb. 23, 9 a.m. to noon, ceremony 2 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Review American customs and cultures or meet with a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service officer for assistance with applications. Eligible patrons will take the oath of allegiance at a naturalization ceremony beginning at 2 p.m. Registration not required. Call 221-2705.

FRG Leadership Academy

Feb. 23-24, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. This training provides commands with a better understanding of their family readiness groups, how to utilize their volunteers, in addition to their roles and responsibilities to the families. Call 221-2418.

Career Technical Training

Feb. 18-19, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Service members will receive guidance and help selecting technical

training schools and technical fields. Review accredited institute applications, scheduling a session with a counselor or a career technical training expert and Veterans Affairs vocational education counselors. Call 221-1213.

Youth Talent Show, Poetry Slam

Feb. 20, 6-8 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Do you have a special talent, love for the spot light or a way with words? Show us your skills! This family-friendly talent show is free and includes all categories: solo, group and family acts. Open to all JBSA youth, elementary through high school. Rehearsal is 3-6 p.m. Saturday at the Middle School Teen Center, building 2515; Feb. 13 from 3-6 p.m. at Youth Services, building 1630; and a mandatory rehearsal is Feb. 19 at the Military & Family Readiness Center. This is a collaborative project with Youth Programs. For more information, call 221-3381 or 221-3502.

TAP: Goals, Plans, Success

Feb. 22-26, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Soldier for Life, building 2263. A mandatory five-day workshop for all service members

separating from the military. The GPS workshop is facilitated by the Department of Labor, Veterans Administration, and M&FRC. A prerequisite class is “Pre-Separation Counseling.” Call 221-1213.

Accessing Higher Education (ACES)

Feb. 22-24, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Education Center, building 2408. A three-day track for those pursuing higher education. Review education requirements and resources that may support personal goals. Call 221-1213.

Army FAP Unit Training

Feb. 24, 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Mandated unit family advocacy training in accordance with Army Regulation 608-18 regarding domestic and child abuse identification, reporting, and prevention. Other topics covered include the Lautenberg amendment, restricted/unrestricted reporting and transitional compensation program. Seating is limited; call to reserve seats for your unit. Reservations will be accepted up to two weeks in advance. For more information, call 221-2418.

Volunteer Orientation

Feb. 24, 10-11 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Volunteers newly assigned to the M&FRC will in-process and receive training on their responsibilities. Call 221-2705.

Salary Negotiation, Social Media

Feb. 24, 9-11 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Learn the skill of salary negotiation and tap into the power of social media to find jobs and market yourself. Call 221-2418.

Volunteer Management Information System

Feb. 24, 9-10 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Volunteers will receive hands-on training with the Volunteer Management Information System. Open to all registered volunteers. Call 221-2705.

Pre-Deployment

Feb. 25, 1-3 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Service members scheduled to deploy, go on a temporary duty assignment longer than 30 days or go on a remote assignment are required to attend this briefing. Call 221-2418 for more information.

FRG Treasurer Training

Feb. 25, 9-11 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Mandatory for current and incoming family readiness group treasurers. Topics covered include regulations for managing covers, FRG informal funds and fundraising. Commanders, FRG leaders and FRG funds custodians are encouraged to attend. Call 221-2418.

Savings And Investment

Feb. 25, 9-10 a.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. Identify strategies to help reach your financial goals and review the different type of saving options. Learn about the risks and rewards of investing. Call 221-2705.

Trails & Tales Guided Tour

Feb. 26, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Military & Family Readiness Center, building 2797. A guided tour of Fort Sam Houston where people can learn about old and new structures that share a rich history dating back more than 150 years. Patrons must be ready for departure at the Military & Family Readiness Center by 8 a.m. Due to limited seating, registration is required. Call 221-2705.

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