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WINGSPREAD

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH

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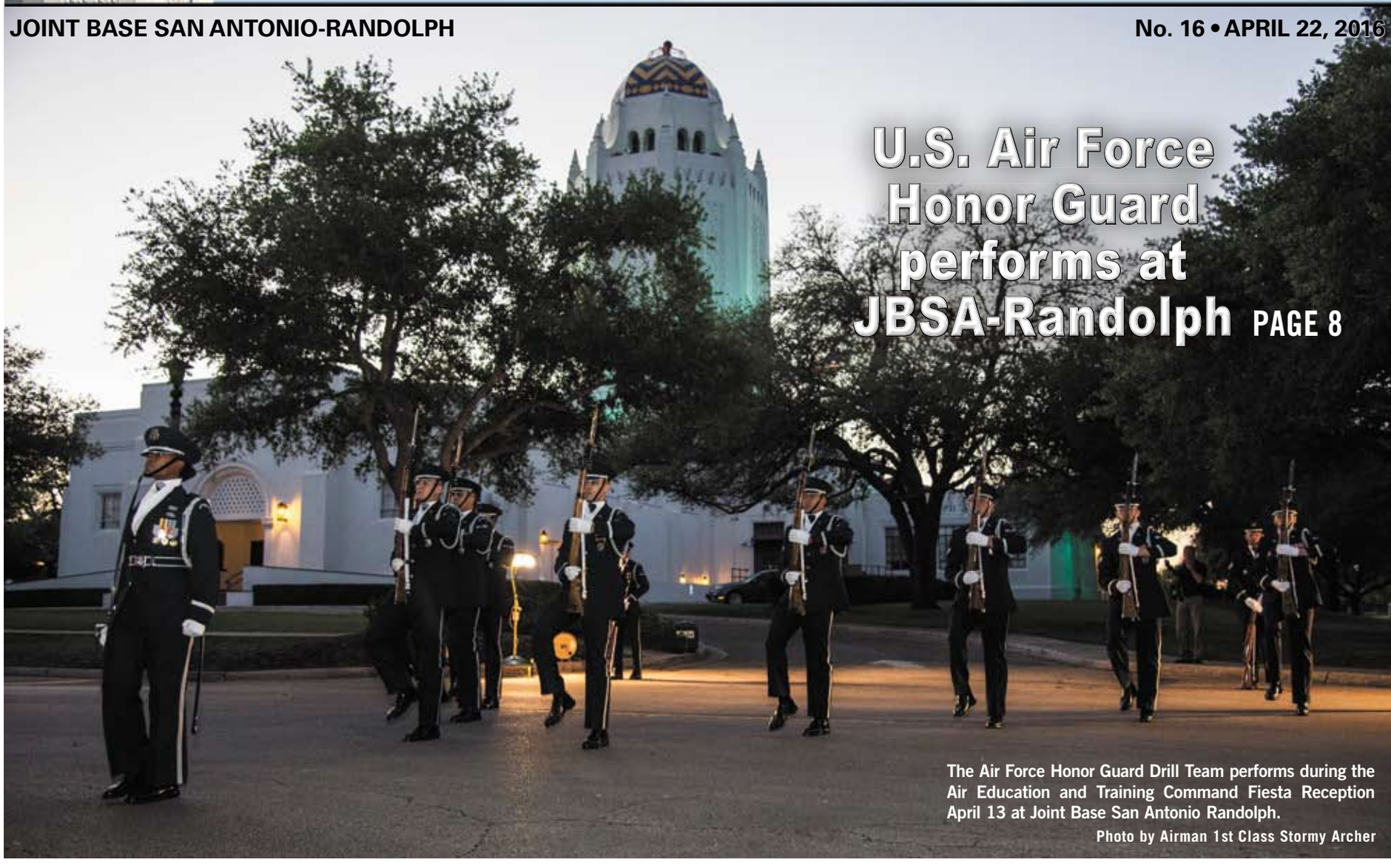

U.S. Air Force Honor Guard performs at JBSA-Randolph

PAGE 8

The Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team performs during the Air Education and Training Command Fiesta Reception April 13 at Joint Base San Antonio Randolph.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer

Honoring the fallen, page 4

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer

Mosquito monitoring, control, page 7

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Ely

Training goes 'to the dogs,' page 12

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS, PREVENTION MONTH

SAAPM: I'm a survivor, not a victim

By Sgt. 1st Class John Brown
18th Medical Command
Fort Shafter, Hawaii

Standing alone in front of an auditorium filled with male and female Soldiers, no one is making a sound, no one is playing on their cell phones and all attention is focused on the female Soldier.

"I was attacked, but I'm not a victim. I'm a survivor," Spc. Brittany Leitner, a patient administration specialist with 18th Medical Command, said during a unit training event April 5 at the Hickam Memorial Theater, Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, Hawaii.

For nearly an hour, the audience sat in silence as Leitner shared her story. For many, the story was hard to hear; for others, it was an opportunity to put a name and face to the Army's campaign to end sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military.

Leitner is like most young Soldiers.

A self-proclaimed military brat, Leitner bounced around from base to base following her mother, a Navy veteran, and her stepfather, a career Army officer, before graduating from Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane, Wash.

After graduating high school, Leitner decided to follow her parents' example and join the military.

After attending Army basic training at Fort Sill, Okla., and Advanced Individual Training at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Leitner was sent to Fort Hood, Texas, where she immediately began preparing for deployment.

Her unit deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, in June 2011, and returned in May 2012.

Like most of her fellow Soldiers, Leitner worked hard to fit in with her unit, but within three months following the deployment, her life would change forever.

"After it happened, I really didn't believe that it had happened," Leitner said. "My NCO had to tell me like a million times before it finally registered."

"I was more upset about being a statistic. It was knowing that I was one of a ton of people that this had happened to in a place where you're supposed to be the strongest, where you are supposed to be able to take care of yourself."

This is where her next struggle began. Leitner was afraid she would be treated differently if people knew she was sexually assaulted and she said that was exactly what happened when other members of her unit found out about the assault.

It wasn't until Leitner transferred to Hawaii that she was able to get away from the glances and stares, the well meaning friends asking her if she was OK and the daily reminders of the assault. But that wasn't a cure.

See SURVIVOR P13

A survivor speaks about sexual assault

To whom it may concern,

The mere fact you are reading this article attests to your will and power to complete even daily skills in the face of adversity. You are strong and powerful because you are here today living, breathing and moving forward.

For example, you woke up this morning, brushed your teeth and put on your uniform. You drove to work, walked into your office or workspace and began your workday.

One would say you're in the military and it is your duty to get up and come to work.

However, if others could imagine being betrayed by someone in the same uniform that you wear, maybe they'd understand you better. You feel hurt, embarrassed, persecuted, branded, belittled, ashamed, threatened, afraid, lonely and mentally sickened to different degrees at different times.

It takes a great amount of strength for you just to wake up, put on the uniform of the military and ultimately breathe. You walk to work with your head high and announce to leadership, peers and subordinates, if you can do it, others can too.

I, too, am not only a survivor, but an overcomer.

Unfortunately, I am not the only survivor; many in our ranks remained silent and hidden behind the scars of sexual assault and rape. These horrible acts did not begin with you or me.

According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network – the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization – there are an average of 293,066 victims, age 12 or older, of rape and sexual assault each year.

These facts do not suggest I am small or just a number. It means the problem is so big it cannot be solved in one awareness month.

A solution will require consistent efforts from every mother, father, sister, brother, friend, co-worker, battle buddy, Soldier, Airmen, Sailor, Marine and Coastguardsman. We can create a way of life and a culture in which we raise our children to respect the boundaries of others and eliminate sexual assault at its core.

The problem may never end 100 percent in the military and United States – good and evil will always coexist – but the good we exhibit on a daily basis will always overshadow evildoers and predators.

You and I can win because we survived. We are overcomers.

Merely because one morning after we were raped or sexually assaulted, we had the strength just to wake up and get out of bed, look ourselves in the mirror, brush our teeth, put on the uniform of the military and ultimately breathe. We can walk to work with our heads high and announce to leadership, peers and subordinates that if we can do it, then so can you. You are not only a survivor, you are an overcomer.

If you are reading this and you are not a male or female survivor of sexual assault, use this as a reminder of those who walk next to you who are or who could be next.

Help solve the problem by intervening, supporting and enlisting others to help. Do not be a "what if I had done something different" person. Be a military member who said, "I did that," "I took action to prevent sexual assault."

Eliminate sexual assault. Know your part. Do your part.

Very Respectfully, Overcomer, USN

WINGSPREAD

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By Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

The World War II Doolittle Raiders were honored during a ceremony marking the 74th anniversary of their Tokyo raid April 18 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

On the same day in 1942, Lt. Col. James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle led a select team of 80 pilots, gunners, navigators and bombardiers as they flew 16 B-25 Mitchell bombers to execute a surprise attack over the islands of Japan in retaliation after the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor Dec. 7 1941.

"What a historic event," said Maj. Gen. James Hecker, 19th Air Force commander. "We're here to celebrate the 74th anniversary of one of the most historic bombing missions we have ever had. It's truly amazing what the 80 crewmembers did only four months after Pearl Harbor was attacked. They were able to take a B-25 that normally uses 3,000 ft. to take off and they did it in 500 ft. aboard an aircraft carrier. They risked their lives so we can do what we are doing today."

Lt. Col. Dick Cole, copilot of Aircraft No. 1 with Doolittle and one of two remaining Raiders still alive, was in attendance and recalled his time flying with Doolittle.

"We were both there and we both knew what we needed to do," said Cole. "Him more than me of course. I was just a brand new second lieutenant and at that time in the military, second lieutenants were to be seen and not heard; but we were all part of his team."

Prior to the raid, the ships carrying the B-25s were spotted by a Japanese naval ship, forcing the Raiders to launch nearly 200 miles early, resulting in them arriving over Japan at the height of day with little cover.

The Doolittle Raiders were still able to hit their targets with complete surprise and out run interceptors.

After the raid, 15 of the 16 B-25s made it to China and one of the aircraft landed in Russia. Three of the Airmen were executed after being captured by the Japanese, one died of disease while in a prison camp, one died parachuting from his aircraft and two Airmen drowned while trying to ditch their aircraft.

"The Doolittle Raid has, over time, been misunderstood," said Gary Boyd, Air Education and Training Command historian. "Originally, I think we were content with calling it a psychological victory. In reality it changed all of World War II in the Pacific because it proved to the Japanese how vulnerable they were to air attack; it changed their mindset and sense of self protection. After the attack they recalled aircraft back to Japan and they became obsessed with increasing the zone of protection for the home empire."

The decision to pull resources back to protect the homeland led directly to U.S. success at the Battle of Midway, said Boyd.

"It was a tremendous victory at a time when we needed a victory of any kind," said Boyd. "At the end of the day, they were successful at changing the dynamic of the war."

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer
Retired Lt. Col. Dick Cole raises a glass to toast the 74th anniversary of the Doolittle Raiders April 18 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO FRONT AND CENTER

Airman 're-blued' by honoring past service members

By Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

Photos by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer
Senior Airman Adam Fiddler (left) and a fellow Joint Base San Antonio Honor Guard member fold an American flag during a funeral ceremony Oct. 10, 2015, at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

Hand-picked to serve as a member of the United States Air Force, my standards of conduct and level of professionalism must be above reproach, for I represent all others in my service.

Others earned the right for me to wear the ceremonial uniform, one that is honored in a rich tradition and history. I will honor their memory by wearing it properly and proudly.

Never will I allow my performance to be dictated by the type of ceremony, severity of the temperature or size of the crowd. I will remain superbly conditioned to perfect all movements throughout every drill and ceremony.

Obligated by my oath, I am constantly driven to excel by a deep devotion to duty and a strong sense of dedication.

Representing every member, past and present, of the United States Air Force, I vow to stand SHARP, CRISP and MOTIONLESS, for I am a ceremonial Guardsman!

The creed of the Air Force Honor Guard embodies the pride, history and professionalism of what it means to be an honor guard member.

For Senior Airman Adam Fiddler, JBSA Honor Guard member, the long hours perfecting facing movements and performing ceremonies at Joint Base San Antonio have helped reinforce a sense of pride and duty in the Air Force.

"It's a really satisfying and fulfilling mission we do," said Fiddler. "It definitely gives you a sense of duty. It reminds you why you do what you do, why you are here and why you signed up for this.

"Joining the honor guard 're-blued' me in a sense. It definitely rejuvenated me as an Airman and as a person. I wouldn't say this is fun, this is a duty, a mission that needs to get done regardless of any obstacle."

Fiddler joined the JBSA Honor Guard in September 2014 and has performed everything from funerals to color details and POW/MIA ceremonies. However, the most satisfying part of the job is handing the flag off to a family member while performing honors at a service member's funeral, Fiddler said.

As a member of the JBSA Honor Guard, Fiddler represents all service members past and present; including members of his own family who served in World War II and the Vietnam War.

"I really wanted to do it because I have family that served in the Air Force," Fiddler said. "My grandfather was a technical sergeant during World War II at Kelly Field training tail gunners. My other grandfather was part of the 1st Infantry during Vietnam, and my dad was in the Army too, so there is definitely a family legacy.

"I remember going to my grandfather's funeral and seeing the Honor Guard perform, and it made a lasting impact on me. Now I've come full circle, and I am able to repay that service to the families of other service members."

Senior Airman Adam Fiddler (left) and a fellow Joint Base San Antonio Honor Guard prepare the American flag for the family of the deceased during a funeral ceremony Oct. 10, 2015, at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

Human trafficking increases worldwide

By John Gutierrez
502nd Security Forces and Logistics Support Group

Trafficking in persons is one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world.

It is estimated that 20.9 million people are victims of human trafficking. Fifty five percent of victims are females and 26 percent of victims are children under 18 years of age.

The United States government enacted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2000. This law defines severe forms of trafficking as sex trafficking, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion; in which a person induced to perform such acts has not attained 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.

Trafficking in persons typically involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to compel a person to provide labor, services or commercial sex. TIP also includes forced prostitution, forced labor and debt bondage.

It is Department of Defense policy to deter activities of its service members, civilian employees, indirect hires, contract personnel and command-sponsored dependents that would facilitate or support TIP, domestically and overseas.

This includes activities such as pandering, prostitution and patronizing a prostitute even though such activities may be legal within a host nation country, but are in violation of Title 10, United States Code, Chapter 47 of The Uniform Code of Military Justice.

TIP is a grave violation of human rights and a worldwide criminal threat to security, civil rights and stability, as well as a direct threat to our national foreign policy goals.

Military personnel, civilian personnel and contractors may come across victims while serving abroad or in the United States.

Sex trafficking locations include bars and brothels, dance clubs and strip clubs, massage parlors and spas and escort services. Labor trafficking locations include food services, domestic services, janitorial services, driving services, construction and hospitality.

If you believe you have witnessed a trafficking operation or believe a person is being trafficked, you should report that information to your chain of command, security forces, Office of Special Ivestigations or Inspector General.

Officials urge caution when grilling

By Ricardo S. Campos
502nd Civil Engineer Squadron Public Fire and Safety educator

After months of being cooped up inside the house, it's time to enjoy the warmer weather and fire up that barbecue grill.

The smell of mesquite wood burning on the grill tends to filtrate the backyards, especially in my neighborhood. Then when the food is placed on the grill, the additional smell of steaks, chicken and fajitas get the taste buds dancing.

Outdoor grilling is one of the most popular ways to cook food. However, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Follow these simple tips and you will be on the way to safe grilling:

• Propane and charcoal barbecue grills should only be used outdoors.

• The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

• Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.

• Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.

• Never leave your grill unattended.

• Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

• There are several ways to get charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.

• Use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add lighter fluid, gasoline or any other flammable liquids to the fire.

• Keep charcoal fluid out of reach of children and away from heat sources.

• There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.

• When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

To learn more about grilling safety, visit the National Fire Protection Association's website at http://www.nfpa.org/education or contact local fire prevention offices at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston at 221-2727, JBSA-Lackland at 671-2921 or JBSA-Randolph at 652-6915.

Mosquito surveillance underway at JBSA locations

By Robert Goetz
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

With the mosquito season in its infancy, public health flights at all Joint Base San Antonio locations have begun to monitor the presence of the pesky creature.

Concern about the Zika virus, stemming from its outbreak in Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean in 2015, is affecting the way public health officials are approaching the monitoring process this year.

Senior Airman Timothy Legge, a 359th Aerospace Medicine Squadron's Public Health Flight technician at JBSA-Randolph, said public health is always taking active measures to educate the public on mosquitoes and the diseases they can carry.

And although they educate everyone, they especially focus on those who are at higher risk for exposure such as deployers and members who travel outside the U.S. to infected areas, Legge said.

Recent concerns with Zika in the U.S. have led to collaborative efforts between public health at the 359th Medical Group, the other JBSA locations and the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. Together, the organizations educate the general public and actively survey and report the number and types of mosquitoes in the area.

"Because Zika is carried by the Aedes mosquito, which primarily feeds in the day, we have changed our approach to trapping," he said. "We now trap both day and night."

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer

Senior Airmen Timothy Legge (left) and Ernesto Arguelles Jr., 359th Aerospace Medicine Squadron public health technicians, set a mosquito trap April 7 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph. When samples are collected, female mosquitoes are separated from the males and sent to the Army Public Health Command Central at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston to see if they are carrying disease-causing viruses.

The 359th AMDS Public Health Flight is also awaiting the arrival of traps that are better suited to the capture of the Aedes mosquito, Legge said. The Aedes albopictus and the Aedes aegypti, which are both present in the San Antonio area, are vectors of Zika, dengue and chikungunya viruses. A large dengue outbreak occurred in South Texas 11 years ago.

Tech. Sgt. Carrie Fierro, 359th AMDS Public Health Flight Community Health Element chief, explained the monitoring procedure.

"The Culex mosquito, a vector for West Nile virus, is active at dusk and dawn, so we place traps out at about 4:30 p.m. and check them in the morning," she said. "The Aedes mosquitoes are more active during the day, so those traps are placed in the morning and picked up late in the day."

Although traps are placed at various locations throughout JBSA-Randolph, "we also trap based on customer complaints due to increased mosquito activity," Fierro said.

When samples are collected, female mosquitoes are separated from the males and sent to the U.S. Army Public Health Command Central at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston to see if they are carrying disease-causing viruses, she said. Females are collected because they are the only mosquitoes that bite.

At JBSA-Lackland, Jorge Rodriguez-Catalan, 559th AMDS community health manager, said vector surveillance is based on factors such as climatic patterns, emerging diseases and resources and San Antonio has the perfect climate for many different species of mosquitoes.

"For the past couple of years, our surveillance has been very active and our findings have been well within what we've expected in the area," Rodriguez-Catalan said.

"I don't foresee anything unusual this year. We are doing all we can when it comes to vector surveillance and expect to have a good program this year in regard to trapping, identifying and testing for diseases," he added.

Surveillance programs at JBSA-Lackland and JBSA-Randolph have yielded few results at this point, Rodriguez-Catalan and Fierro said.

"There is nothing significant so far, but it is very early in the season," Rodriguez-Catalan said.

In regard to the Zika virus, Rodriguez-Catalan said it is important to know about the signs and symptoms and for providers to conduct thorough travel histories on their patients, especially pregnant women and those who've traveled to areas identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The CDC has put out guidance for providers to follow at www.cdc.gov/zika," Rodriguez-Catalan said.

JBSA public health officials said prevention is the best measure against mosquitoes.

Legge said wearing the right clothing outdoors – such as long sleeves and long pants – and using mosquito repellents containing diethyl toluamide, commonly known as DEET, or permethrin are strong countermeasures against mosquito bites.

Fierro said an effective dose of DEET is important, so people should read the label on the bottle.

"Regardless of the type of mosquito, the way to prevent disease transmission is the same," Rodriguez-Catalan said. "Avoid mosquitoes when they are most active. Treating your clothing with DEET and permethrin and eliminating breeding sites are your best protection. You should also mosquito-proof your home by keeping screens on windows and doors closed and to use air conditioning when available."

Breeding sites include jars, bottles, tires, flower pots, bird baths and pet dishes.

"Mosquitoes can even lay their eggs on a leaf that has collected water," Fierro said. "Anything that collects water and is stagnant for five to seven days can be a breeding site for mosquitoes."

For more information on diseases, prevention and proper use of insect repellents, visit http://www.cdc.gov/Features/stopmosquitoes/index.html.

U.S. Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team performs for Fiesta, local students

By Jeremy Gerlach
Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Public Affairs

Graduating Airmen at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland's coin and retreat ceremony got a first-hand look at the precision and discipline of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team April 14.

The honor guard was invited to perform for Fiesta events, an annual celebration that commemorates the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto.

While in San Antonio, the team brought their unique drill routine – where slick shoes click together, heels turn on a dime and bayoneted rifles fly through the air in careful choreography – to several area events.

The group was particularly excited to perform at the JBSA-Lackland coin ceremony, given the size of the audience, said 1st Lt. Kenda Gusme, U.S. Air Force Honor Guard director of operations.

Basic military training weekly graduates, on average, 700 to 800 Airmen.

"This is a phenomenal opportunity to be here performing," Gusme said. "As a commander, you've just got adrenaline rushing, because you're making sure the group is going at 100 percent for the spectators."

The drill team is stationed at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, D.C.

Knowing that JBSA-Lackland is where all enlisted Airmen are first introduced to the high standards of the Air Force during basic military training, Gusme said the drill team couldn't have picked a better place to make a first impression on these Airmen.

"We're representing every Airman and we want to make sure we convey exactly what we stand for as Airmen with these performances," she said. "That means we need to display discipline and precision."

Airman 1st Class Kosei Carty and Senior Airman Angela Mitchell, U.S. Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team ceremonial guardsmen, talked about their experiences during basic training.

"I feel like it's changed quite a bit," Carty said. "It's really cool coming back and being able to experience – all over again – what we came through here."

Mitchell agreed, noting that it was an honor to perform for Airmen who were taking the same steps towards an Air Force career that she did.

"It's an awesome feeling being here," she said. "This is these Airmen's biggest day. It's the first time they get to see their families again and the first time they feel like they're Airmen instead of trainees, so it's cool to be able to perform for them."

The honor guard performed at Fiesta events, including the Air Education and Training Command Fiesta Reception April 13 at JBSA-Randolph. They will also be visiting local colleges and high schools such as the University of Texas at San Antonio, Samuel Clemens High School, Sam Houston High School and Sidney Lanier High School.

For more information about the honor guard, visit http://www.honorguard.af.mil.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Ely
The U.S. Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team performs for ROTC students April 14 at Samuel Clemens High School in Schertz, Texas. The team can perform drill movements in intricate, constantly changing formations while holding a fully-functional M-1 rifle.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer
The U.S. Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team performs during the Air Education and Training Command Fiesta Reception April 13 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Ely
The U.S. Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team performs for ROTC students April 14 at Samuel Clemens High School in Schertz, Texas.

Joint Base San Antonio joins in on Fiesta festivities

Joint Base San Antonio has joined the San Antonio community to celebrate the 125th Fiesta. Throughout the event, JBSA members have commemorated the heroes of the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto by showing their presence at Fiesta events and hosting members of the Fiesta royalty.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer

Lt. Gen. Darryl Roberson, commander of Air Education and Training Command, welcomes Joint Base San Antonio military ambassadors to the AETC Fiesta Reception April 13 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

Photo by Johnny Saldivar

San Antonio Fiesta dignitaries view the graduation of Air Force basic military trainees April 15 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Photo by Johnny Saldivar

Joint Base San Antonio military members join Fiesta officials on a parade float during the Texas Cavaliers River Parade April 18 on the River Walk in downtown San Antonio.

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph News Briefs

Retiree Appreciation Day

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Retiree Appreciation Day is 9 a.m. to noon Saturday at the Kendrick Club. There will be representatives from government agencies, veteran organizations and local organizations attending. For more information, call 652-6880.

National Drug Take Back Day

Turn in unused or expired medication for safe disposal 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 30. Collection sites will be San Antonio Military Medical Center Medical mall and the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Community Pharmacy. Medications with syringes or needles will not be accepted. Visit http://www.dea.gov or call 800-882-9539 for a collection site near you.

JBSA-Fort Sam Houston refill pharmacy

The refill side of the community/refill pharmacy in building 2401 near the post exchange at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston will be closed soon for flooring repairs. The community side will remain open but will not be able to distribute refills while the refill side is closed.

Patients should request and pick up their refills at either the Capt. Jennifer M. Moreno Clinic Pharmacy or the San Antonio Military Medical Center Main Outpatient Pharmacy near the Medical Mall.

SAMMC Main Outpatient Pharmacy hours are Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Moreno Clinic Pharmacy hours are Monday-Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Patients who are enrolled in the Community Based Medical Homes at Schertz, Westover and Taylor-Burk Pharmacies will be able to continue picking up their refills at these locations.

Street construction planned

The 502nd Civil Engineer Squadron is conducting a re-pavement project on 5th Street West, including replacement of existing pavement, curbs and sidewalks from F Street West to C Street West. Demolition and construction will occur in various phases and will require street and parking closures on 5th Street West for the time periods below:

- Current – May 13: 5th Street West will be closed from D Street to C Street.
- Repaving, May 21: 5th Street West will be closed from F Street to C Street for paving. Detour routes will be marked. Call 652-1224 for details.

By 2nd Lt. Avery Larkin
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph
Public Affairs

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph and the city of Schertz held a ceremony April 12 recognizing new street signs that inform city residents of local flight operations.

Schertz Mayor Michael Carpenter and City Manager John Kessel unveiled the signs in front of the Schertz City Council Chambers with Col. Matthew Isler, 12th Flying Training Wing commander.

"We're very thankful for Schertz' steadfast commitment in everything they've done to protect the flying mission," Isler said. "These signs today are about transparency. This is about home buyers in Schertz understanding the strong relationship between Schertz and JBSA-Randolph."

There will be eight signs posted around the city to notify community members that Schertz is in a JBSA-Randolph flight training area. The new Air Installation and Compatible Use Zone Study identifies that Schertz's proximity to JBSA-Randolph subjects the area to certain levels of jet noise throughout the week. These signs make people aware of that, said Brian James, Schertz executive director of development.

"Never before have the Air Force and Schertz been closer in cooperation," Carpenter said. "The history of Schertz and the Air Force are closely intertwined. Support for our military counterparts is one of the foundations of our city and we are proud to take this step forward."

Mission success at a military installation depends on the support of the community around it. JBSA-Randolph has strong relationships with many cities throughout San Antonio and Schertz is a prime example of that, Isler said.

"Initiatives like this will help the 12th Flying Training Wing mission progress into the future," Isler said. "Schertz's commitment will keep us training pilots in this area for the next 85 years."

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Ely

From left: John Kessel, Schertz city manager; Col. Matthew Isler, 12th Flying Training Wing commander; Michael Carpenter, mayor of Schertz; and Chief Master Sgt. Troy Palmer, 12th FTW command chief master sergeant; unveil the new city sign April 12 in front of the Schertz City Council Chambers.

AETC's 66th TRS teams with canine search, rescue organizations

"It's really great getting to work in different types of environments, different terrains. This abandoned neighborhood is really great because we get to work with the dogs without having to worry about traffic or other people and property lines, so it gives us a lot of opportunities."

Kristin Smaltz
Alpha Search and Rescue president

Photos by Airman 1st Class Lauren Ely

Above: Wesley Willoughby, Alpha Search and Rescue trailing handler, and his dog, Ehrlich Vormund, prepare to hit a 24-hour trail during a training exercise April 2 at the Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Medina Annex. Right: Watson, trailing dog for Alpha Search and Rescue, discovers the hiding place of a 66th Training Squadron student during a training exercise April 2 at JBSA-Lackland Medina Annex.

By Airman 1st Class Lauren Ely
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

(Editor's note: The last names of some individuals in this story have been removed for security purposes.)

The 66th Training Squadron partnered with civilian volunteer canine search and rescue organizations for a training exercise April 2 at JBSA-Lackland's Medina Annex.

The event was the first time the organizations, Alpha Search and Rescue and Seeker Dogs, have worked alongside military personnel in a training environment at JBSA, said Maj. Bryan, Air Force Material Command senior research chemist.

Bryan said the goal of the training exercise was to cultivate a relationship between all of the organizations so large-scale exercises could continue to occur.

"Training with canine organizations is always a challenge logistically," Bryan said. "To simulate lost people we need to place a person in an isolated area for an extended period of time to provide the canine with a realistic search scenario.

"In the unlikely event that an incident did occur on JBSA, that necessitates outside resources, these would be two local teams that would be called on first to assist. You never want the first interaction to be at a real event."

A total of 20 canines and their handlers, as well as JBSA Fire and Emergency Services, joined to complete more than 90 different training scenarios directed to personnel recovery, which included man-trailing, large area search and human remains detection, Bryan said.

The designated training zone on Medina Annex was comprised of an unused housing development, as well as an urban simulator, which included wooded areas and unused trailers. The sparsely populated areas created a beneficial setting for Seeker Dogs and Alpha SAR's dog handlers to work with their dogs, said Kristin Smaltz, Alpha SAR president.

"It's really great getting to work in different types of environments and different terrains," Smaltz said. "This abandoned neighborhood is really great because we get to work with the dogs without having to worry about traffic or other people and property lines, so it gives us a lot of opportunities."

The training environment also allowed 33 JBSA volunteers, including some students from the 66th TRS, to experience personnel recovery firsthand.

Airman 1st Class Cody Thaler, 66th TRS student, said being able to see the capabilities of a trailing dog and how it can track a human's scent was "extremely beneficial."

"The ones that have graduated the selection course – it's good for them to know later on when they're providing instruction," Thaler said. "It's going to be helpful for them when they have to give country specific briefs to pilots or any other person that may need the training."

Although it was the first interaction on base between the SAR agencies and the 66 TRS, all the participants involved were eager to continue a working relationship, Bryan said.

"We were hoping to get an exposure for each group to their potential counterparts," Bryan said. "Some of the dogs did have issues throughout the day, but all of the training scenarios were successfully completed by multiple dogs, showing the depth of these teams to be able to assist in the event of a real-life event."

SURVIVOR from P2

Leitner said she felt like she was walking around with a giant bubble inside that was waiting to burst when the Soldiers in her new unit found out her secret.

"I struggled really hard trying to hide it and then I met someone who was talking about her experience," Leitner said.

At this point in her life, Leitner was willing to do anything to help cope with the swarm of emotions that were swelling inside, even if that meant telling a room full of strangers about the worst day of her life.

"I so wasn't ready for it and it went horribly wrong, but I needed it. Speaking to people became my therapy," Leitner said.

Talking about her experience wasn't easy.

"I would come in extremely afraid. I didn't know what their reaction would be. I didn't know if they would be able to look me in the eyes, but I started getting standing ovations and it was shocking to me at first that people actually cared enough."

Leitner says she began to realize the importance of what she was doing when senior NCOs and officers began taking her aside after her talks and telling her their own stories of being sexually assaulted as young Soldiers.

"They couldn't imagine how I, at 20 something years old, could stand before a battalion full of people and talk about something that happened to me like that.

"I started this to help myself, but I realized it was helping a lot more people than myself," Leitner said.

Master Sgt. Joseph Collins, 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, said he first met Leitner when she spoke to the students at a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, or SARC, course.

"It kind of made everything feel real. Nothing drives it home until you have a survivor stand in front of you and tell you what happened to them and how it affected them and effected their life," Collins said.

When Collins became the SARC for the 94th AAMDC, he knew he wanted to share the same lesson with the rest of his unit.

Collins said when Leitner spoke to the unit, "I felt like it was very effective. You can judge it by the way people ask questions, no one was falling asleep, they were paying attention, they were focused on Leitner and her story."

"Afterwards there were leaders that came forward and said 'that is what we needed to wake our formations up' because we've never had anyone come out and do that," Collins said.

"I think Leitner brings to light a very volatile challenge, but brings life to it just by her standing in front of the audience and giving us her thought process," Col. Ken Revell, 94th AAMDC command chaplain, said. "But you get to feel how she got where she was because you're right inside her story and that story plays out . . . it forces us to ask ourselves the hard questions as leaders."

"It just made it very real for us. I remember the Sgt. Major said 'thank you for getting that guy out of our formation' and that's a leadership thing that he was saying and at that moment, I think, he was having a big brother moment," Revell said.

"It's hard to measure, but Leitner's talk has a potentially transformative effect," Revell said.

After Leitner talks to a unit, a line usually forms to talk to her. Most simply want to shake her hand and thank her for her bravery, while others want to share their personal stories.

"There are people who want me to speak again to other groups and a few that want my contact information so I can talk to them offline; I usually have at least one survivor come forward who wants to know how they can talk to me at a later time," Leitner said.

"It's really hard not to feel like this was something that I could have prevented. There are a million 'what if's' that go through your mind, but having people accepting me and thanking me for speaking to them has made it better for me," Leitner said.

Leitner established an anonymous email address that allows fellow survivors to contact her. The email address is survivors4survivors38@yahoo.com.

Revell summed it up when he said that Leitner and the other survivors who come forward to share their stories are, "some of the most courageous Soldiers I've ever seen in my life."

To report a sexual assault, call the 24/7 Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Hotline at 808-7272.