

# JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

OCTOBER 11, 2019



PHOTO BY SGT. MAJ. FAITH LAUGHTER

Members of the 413th Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear, or CBRN, Company, a U.S. Army Reserve unit from Florence, S.C., decontaminate a simulated casualty during a joint training exercise at Jacobi Hospital in New York City, Sept. 28. The training was planned by the U.S. Army North Civil Support Training Activity.

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# Army Combat Fitness Test changes affect all Soldiers

By Thomas Brading

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

Major changes that will affect every Soldier are coming to the Army Combat Fitness Test, officials announced Sept. 27.

The changes, locked in for fiscal year 2020, include the official testing standards for all Soldiers, each one tailored to an individual's military occupational specialty. Also, all Initial Military Training (Officers and Enlisted) will take the ACFT as a graduation requirement, and the arm-extension pushup will replace the hand-release pushup.

The ACFT is expected to be the standard fitness test for all Soldiers by October 2020.

The latest adjustments come on the heels of the Army's initial message that the age- and gender-neutral ACFT will replace the nearly 40-year-old Army Physical Fitness Test, or APFT. Since then, Army officials have assessed ACFT standards, making tweaks and changes as needed, to ensure the fitness test precisely targets readiness and combat-related skills for a new era of Soldiers.

However, one thing that remains is the emphasis on physical fitness leading to combat readiness.

"Physical fitness is fundamental to sustained Army readiness," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston said. "We must have highly trained, disciplined and physically fit Soldiers capable of winning on any battlefield. The ACFT, specifically linked to common warfighting tasks, will help us assess and improve the individual readiness of the force."

In the beginning, Army leaders based their standards on "scientific data, and the need to revolutionize the culture of fitness in our force," said Maj. Gen. Lonnie Hibbard, commander of the U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training. Now, as new data becomes available, the Army is



SGT. 1ST CLASS OSVALDO EQUITO

"looking at ways to refine how scores meet what Soldiers are accomplishing in the field."

The new changes are part of a two-part decision-making process based on science and results, said Dr. Whitfield East, EdD, Research Physiologist for CIMT.

Specific Battalions were selected to provide a sample from across the Army, with Soldiers from nearly every MOS, who represented the Active Duty, National Guard, and Army Reserve components, Hibbard added.

Although the new ACFT standards are "locked in for next year," Megan Reed, spokeswoman for U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training said, they "are viewed as a living document, and are subsequent to change after the larger and more diverse phase of training" in fiscal 2020.

The larger servicewide test consists of every Soldier, with active-duty members taking the test as a diagnostic twice, six-months apart, and Reserve and National Guard Soldiers scheduled to complete the diagnostic test once.

The strategy, Maj. Gen. Hibbard said, will expose Soldiers to the ACFT, help them strategize the best way to train, and give the Army a wider demographic of data for decisions in fiscal year 2021.

"We've compiled good empirical research on what's required to do high physically demanding, common Soldier tasks," East said, regarding last year's field test. "When you look at the six events of the ACFT, they cover major components of fitness: muscular strength, muscular endurance, explosive power, and a lot are anaerobic power or anaerobic endurance."

Next year, Soldiers in Basic Combat Training, Advanced Individual Training, One Station Unit Training, Warrant Officer Basic Course and the Basic Officer Leader's Course, will take the ACFT as a graduation requirement. Doing so allows IMT Soldiers to "train realistically and develop physically in the earliest phase in their career," Hibbard said. "This sets them up for success."

This game plan optimizes readiness, by placing an "ACFT-trained Soldier" at their first duty assignment, Hibbard added, where they'll be able to promote readiness among their fellow Soldiers.

One of the major changes is the arm extension pushup. To complete the exercise, Soldiers start chest down and do a traditional pushup. Then, while back in the down position, they will move their arms outward, followed by going in to do another pushup. Soldiers will repeat as many times as

possible, enabling additional upper-body muscles to be used.

Along the same lines of the hand-release pushup, the arm extension pushup tests muscular strength and shoulder endurance, Hibbard said.

Although the ACFT tests Soldiers physical fitness, being physically active is only one aspect of training for the test, officials said. In fact, the ACFT is just one part of the Army's Holistic Health and Fitness system, or H2F, that empowers the force to be strong, well-rounded Soldiers: mentally, spiritually, and physically.

The non-physical elements of H2F are vital for Soldiers to succeed on the ACFT, Hibbard said. These components include sleep- and nutritional-readiness, as well as spiritual- and mental-readiness. They all work together into a single, comprehensive health system.

How Soldiers train for the ACFT will impact how well they'll do, Grinston said.

"I would encourage all Soldiers across each component to begin training for the ACFT now — if you aren't already," Grinston said. "We have already released an ACFT training guide with exercises from Field Manual 7-22 to help Soldiers successfully prepare for the test with or without equipment."

*Staff Sgt. Gabriel Wright, a signals intelligence analyst with the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade, grades the Hand-Release Push-Up event May 17 as part of Army Combat Fitness Test Level II Grader validation training at Fort Meade, Md.*

## JBSA LEGACY

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# Feedback Fridays

By Brig. Gen. Laura L. Lenderman  
502D AIR BASE WING AND JOINT BASE  
SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

Feedback Fridays is a weekly forum that aims to connect the 502d Air Base Wing with members of the Joint Base San Antonio community. Questions are collected during commander's calls, town hall meetings and throughout the week.

If you have a question or concern, please send an email to [RandolphPublicAffairs@us.af.mil](mailto:RandolphPublicAffairs@us.af.mil) using the subject line "Feedback Fridays." Questions will be further researched and published as information becomes available.

NOTE: On last week's Feedback Friday, there was an error in Lt. Col. Rahsul Freeman's contact information that was provided as part of the answer to the question regarding the JBSA-Camp Bullis Hunting Program. The corrected email address is [rahsul.j.freeman.mil@mail.mil](mailto:rahsul.j.freeman.mil@mail.mil). Our apologies for the miscommunication and the inconvenience this may have caused.

## Personnel Issues

**Q.** How can we report civilian personnel (without fear), including supervisors, who may not follow time and attendance requirements?

**A.** Thank you for the question. We have found that commanders and civilian leadership are the best people to go to with complaints because they have a quicker and more direct response capability to correct wrong-doing.

However, if you have been unable to resolve your complaint through your chain of command and you believe that inappropriate conduct has occurred, or a violation of law, policy, procedure, or Air Force Instruction has occurred, then you have the right to:

- ▶ 1. File an Inspector General (IG) complaint without going through your supervisory channel,
- ▶ 2. File an IG complaint without fear of reprisal, and
- ▶ 3. Submit IG complaints anonymously.

IGs at every level maintain a complaint hotline to assist anonymous filers. Please contact the Office of the Inspector General, 502 Air Base Wing at

210-808-7524, DSN 420-7524 or the IG Hotline at 210-808-1000 (DSN 420-1000) for further assistance.

**Q.** Would it be possible for the Department of Defense and/or Department of the Air Force to provide unlimited sick days?

**A.** Thank you for your question. In general, military "sick days" are categorized as convalescent leave, and are governed by AFI 36-3003, Military Leave Program. Convalescent leave is "an authorized absence normally for the minimal time essential to meet the medical needs for recuperation." Convalescent leave can initially only be approved for 30 days, but that can be extended based on additional medical review and consent.

In theory, convalescent leave can be extended indefinitely, but extended absences may trigger medical board evaluation and/or potential discharge.

Sick days for civilian employees are governed by AFI 36-815, Absence and Leave. Full-time civilian employees earn 4 hours of sick leave for each full biweekly pay period. There is no limitation on the amount of sick leave that may be accumulated and carried forward from year to year.

Because Air Force guidance must comply with higher level guidance, it is

not possible for the Department of the Air Force to provide "unlimited" sick days to civilian employees without proper higher-level authorization that changes the current accrual rate.

Although it is possible to change the current number of sick days allowed for civilian employees, since the requirements and limitations for sick days are delineated in the United States Code, the only way to have that changed is for Congress to enact legislation to that effect. The best way to work toward this change would be to petition your congressional representatives.

## Installation & Facilities

**Q.** I noticed that some of our Security Forces personnel spend a lot of time at the JBSA-Lackland gates in the morning giving visitors directions to different places, which slows the flow of traffic.

Would it be possible to get huge signs (like at airports) that have directions to the JBSA-Lackland Parade Field and other areas that our weekly visitors can use for direction to places? This way, our Security Forces personnel can just tell visitors to follow the signs instead of having to spend time trying to give directions.

**A.** Thank you for your question and insightful solution to helping our

visitors get to their destination.

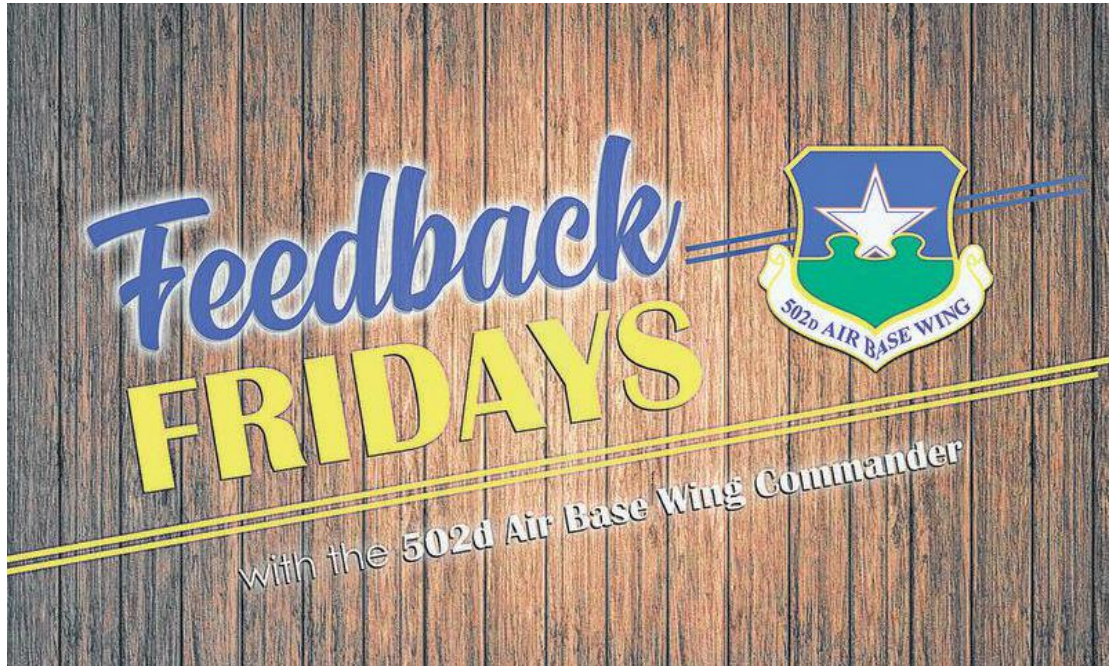
We have actually tried the sign option in the early 1990's by posting an 18-foot high information sign, along with eight other signs throughout the base. In 1992, we found that we had about a dozen rear-end car accidents in a three-month span because drivers would completely stop to read the sign.

Because of this, we limit our small brown and blue signs to only the most prominent and most traveled areas.

Thanks to today's Internet-connected world, we're able to get ever-changing information straight into your hands! These includes public listings of all our JBSA buildings in various map apps, such as Google Maps, and providing a wealth of information on the [JBSA.mil](http://JBSA.mil) public website (click the "Information" drop-down and you'll see "Visitor Information").

And, as always, visitors can contact our 24-hour Base Defense Operations Center, or BDOC at JBSA-Camp Bullis and JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, call 210-221-9331; JBSA-Lackland at 210-671-2018 and JBSA-Randolph at 210-652-5700.

**Q.** I am the superintendent at one of our Chapel Branches at JBSA-Lackland.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

## FEEDBACK FRIDAYS

From page 3

It was brought to my attention that one of our AiT Volunteers (White Rope) used an Uber to commute from JBSA-Camp Bullis to JBSA-Lackland in order to participate in a volunteer opportunity at the Refuge Ministry Center, and would be doing this again to participate in another volunteer event with the SARC.

Further investigation has revealed that not only are tech students not allowed to bring POVs onto JBSA-Camp Bullis (not sure who's authority governs this), they also do not have a shuttle to and from JBSA-Lackland.

This severely limits options that these students have regarding stewardship opportunities and participation in morale events (community center, bowling, movies, etc.).

Are there better options to allow these students access to volunteer opportunities and morale building activities that are offered at JBSA-Lackland while honoring the commander's intent to provide a robust training experience?

**A.** Thank you for bringing this concern forward. We definitely encourage servicemen and women to support these types of events and volunteer in the community when possible, but it should not come at their personal expense.

In researching your question, our team shared that we do have transportation services available to all JBSA locations, including JBSA-Camp Bullis, through several methods.

For technical school students, transportation requests must be submitted by unit approved schedulers familiar with DOD Authorized Use of Government Vehicles. Once a request is received, a determination is made on the most cost effective method to provide support based on the number of students.

Transportation to chapel-sponsored activities are requested by the Base Chaplain staff at each site. Additionally, if an Airman notifies their MTL of a volunteer event they'd like to participate in, like the one mentioned, the MTLs can facilitate transportation with the 502nd LRS or, if able, provide transportation (MTL GOV, graduate driver).

In addition, the 502nd LRS also operates a shuttle every Sunday which departs JBSA-Camp Bullis at 5:45 a.m., allowing all personnel to attend worship services at JBSA-Lackland. The shuttle

does not depart from JBSA-Lackland until 6 p.m., allowing students ample time to participate in MWR activities, shop at the Commissary/Exchange, and dine at the numerous restaurants near JBSA-Lackland.

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the JBSA Ground Transportation office at 210-671-3318.

**Q.** I'm not sure how the parking on JBSA-Randolph works for GOVs, but there seems to not be enough parking spots.

My co-workers and I have jobs that require us to carry heavy items to and from our vehicles to the work area. With the lack of GOV parking and limited parking on JBSA-Randolph as a whole, we tend to have to walk extremely far or risk parking in spaces not intended for parking.

I am particularly concerned about Building 499, 494, etc., areas where they are paving a new parking lot. I would like to know if they have taken into account GOV parking and also why are there so many handicap parking spaces with wheelchair access in the front of the bldg.

The handicap spots with wheelchair access takes up a lot of space and simply could be repainted to consolidate for better usage.

**A.** Thank you for your concerns. Parking is a challenge across all of JBSA, but fortunately for us, our CE team has been working with our leadership team at JBSA-Randolph to help address specific parking issues in the area you've identified.

Reserve parking requests are coordinated through facility managers, so if you have specific concerns or requests, to include more GOV parking, please engage with them directly. Handicap parking design and quantity is regulated by Americans with Disability Act, or ADA, and adjusted based on base specific policies. With the construction of the new parking lot, CE is hopeful that some of the parking challenges in that area are alleviated.

### Miscellaneous

**Q.** Why is there not an Air Force Museum here at JBSA-Randolph? JBSA-Lackland has an Airman Museum and a huge airplane static display. Don't we have enough historical accomplishments here at JBSA-Randolph to merit having an Air Force Museum here?

**A.** Thank you for the excellent question! Without a doubt, JBSA-Randolph has great historical significance.

In order for an Air Force Heritage

Center (similar to the one on JBSA-Lackland) to be established, a number of factors would have to be considered, including staffing a request for such a facility to be approved by the Air Force's Historical Office.

Additional factors include the location of such a facility, the scope of a proposed collection, staffing and funding. In short, a lot of planning has to go into establishing a museum from gathering all of the data, to allocating the funds and manpower, and it must be brought up to the Air Force-level Historical Office for approval.

But that does not mean it is impossible! We can look into our future plans for JBSA and see where a museum would best fit at Randolph. Thank you again for your question, and please continue to give us feedback on how we can better serve JBSA!

**Q.** I arrived at work at approximately 5:45 p.m. and started to check my email.

As I scrolled through, I saw great opportunities for professional development and career advancement such as FTAC instructor slots, technical training instructor, and the SLECP-O program call for nominations. The latter of these was something I truly wanted to be considered for as I had worked hard to achieve my bachelor's degree in the past 3 years, so I read the email chain and saw multiple forwards from various levels of leadership down in the past week.

After getting to the bottom, I read the package instructions and deadline; the deadline was the very day that I received the email. Because of this, I had no opportunity whatsoever to submit a package or be considered.

What can be done to better communicate these types of opportunities so that everyone has ample time to submit their packages for consideration?

**A.** Thank you very much for bringing this concern to my attention. First, I sincerely apologize that you missed an opportunity to participate in one of our great commissioning programs. I ask that you continue to work hard and when the opportunity comes around again and if you're still eligible, please submit your package for consideration.

As far as communication is concerned, many of these opportunities are pushed to organizations via the Task Management Tool, or TMT.

Because TMT access is limited throughout groups and squadrons, the taskers are often removed from TMT and then routed via email. I will work with our group and squadron

leadership to ensure that the taskers are distributed to all supervisors and eligible members in a timely manner.

Leadership is also briefed on the status of these programs during our weekly Wing Staff Meetings, with the expectation that they bring the information back to their respective units for distribution.

Again, my sincere apologies that you did not have the opportunity to submit a package for this round of the SLECP-O program, and I sincerely hope that this experience has not discouraged you from re-applying. If you have any further questions, please reach out to our enlisted matters exec team: Master Sgt. Kevin Soucy or Staff Sgt. Zhane Woodall.

**Q.** I have heard rumors that JBSA might separate and go back to the way it was prior to joint basing. Is there any truth to this?

**A.** Thank you for asking this important question! This is a great opportunity to share information about the service secretaries-directed joint base study.

On July 23, 2018, during a Service Secretary breakfast, Joint Basing was a key topic. In order to align the services' understanding and positions on current Joint Basing issues, the secretaries tasked the services to develop a joint proposal to address service issues at multiple joint basing locations.

At JBSA, the Center for Army Analysis conducted a deep-dive study from September 2018 to April 2019, which resulted in several recommended reforms.

On May 28, 2019, the Army and Air Force Secretaries signed a memo agreeing to address the Center of Army Analysis findings by developing a plan of action that incorporates and addresses the recommended reforms through the Joint Management Oversight Structure, or JMOS.

Currently, we are in the process of developing courses of action for each addressed reform. Once approved at our local JMOS level, COAs will be submitted to the Senior Installation Management Group to develop a proposed implementation plan to the Service Vice Chiefs of Staff for approval.

This has been made a priority, and we are all in to get after these reforms. We have already started working some these reforms and are making progress.

Ultimately, there is no plan to dissolve JBSA; we see this as a great opportunity for the 502nd ABW to partner with our Mission Partners in improving delivery of installation support and services across JBSA.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

# Air Force recognizes Energy Action Month 2019

By Corrie Poland

AIR FORCE ENERGY, SAF/IE

October is Energy Action Month, an opportunity to highlight why energy is a critical enabler to combat capability for the U.S. Air Force and Department of Defense, and to encourage smarter energy use and management for installations, ground vehicles, and aircraft.

Unveiled this year, the Air Force theme of "Energy Able, Mission Capable" educates Airmen about the importance of energy readiness and resilience for the global mission.

"By prioritizing energy management and resilience, we are building a strong foundation for the future warfighter and ensuring Airmen have energy when and where they need it," said John W. Henderson, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Energy.

Every year the U.S. Air Force spends nearly \$6 billion on energy, with approximately 82 percent used for aviation fuel, 16 percent for facilities and installations, and 2 percent for ground vehicles.

While energy is a necessary part of operations, as the modern battlefield grows increasingly complex, keeping it secure and readily available can pose serious risks and challenges for troops.

Powering aviation assets requires complex fuel planning and logistics, all the way from refinery and storage facilities to fuel convoys and transport to the end-user. As power projection platforms, installations depend on

secure, reliable and quality power to ensure Air Force mission assurance.

The Air Force is focusing on energy resilience and optimization to sustain warfighting capabilities in the air and on the ground.

For instance, upgraded aircraft aerodynamics increase range and limit the need for aerial refueling. Investments in modern software improve the effectiveness of tankers and streamline mission planning. Engine sustainment initiatives increase time on wing and prevent some maintenance issues. At the installation level, from new onsite generating capabilities to ensure energy resilient operations, to a record setting year of energy savings performance contracting, the Air Force is prepared to fly, fight and win from its installations under any conditions.

During Energy Action Month, the Air Force will emphasize the need for smart energy solutions and inform Airmen, Air Force senior leaders, policy makers, and aligned organizations about what they can do to effectively distribute, generate, and manage resilient and reliable energy across the enterprise.

To share the message, visit [www.safie.hq.af.mil/EnergyActionMonth](http://www.safie.hq.af.mil/EnergyActionMonth) for resources and follow the hashtag #EnergyAbleMissionCapable at [www.facebook.com/AirForceEnergy](https://www.facebook.com/AirForceEnergy) and [www.twitter.com/AFEnergy](https://www.twitter.com/AFEnergy).

Air Force Energy, comprises Operational and Installation Energy, is led by the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment, and Energy (SAF/IE) and is located in the Pentagon.



# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## Soldier self-amputates leg to aid battle buddies

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A year after his accident and the loss of his leg, Spc. Ezra Maes is still amazed at the circumstances that led to his survival. If you ask, he'll credit his survival to a uniform belt, smart phone and "shockingly good" cell service.

What the 21-year-old Soldier fails to mention is the sheer force of will it took for him to stay alive.

"If I didn't help myself, my crew, no one was going to," said Maes, now assigned to the Brooke Army Medical Center Warrior Transition Battalion at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. "I knew I had to do everything I could to survive."

A year earlier, the Army had deployed Maes, an armor crewman stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, to Poland in support of a joint training mission called "Atlantic Resolve." He served as the loader for the main cannon of an M1A2 Abrams tank, a massive 65-ton tank known for its heavy armor and lethal firepower.

Exhausted on the second day of a weeklong rotation in Slovakia, he and two other crew members fell asleep in the tank that evening. He was jolted awake a few hours later by the sudden movement of the tank heading downhill.

"I called out to the driver, 'Step on the brakes!' " Maes said. "But he shouted back that it wasn't him."

The parking brake had failed. The crew quickly initiated emergency braking procedures, but the operational systems were unresponsive

due to a hydraulic leak.

The tank was now careening down the hill at nearly 90 mph. "We realized there was nothing else we could do and just held on," Maes said.

After a few sharp bumps, they crashed into an embankment at full speed. Maes was thrown across the tank, his leg catching in the turret gear. He then felt the full force of the tank turret sliding onto his leg.

His initial thought was his leg was broken. His next thought was he needed to get free so he could assist Sgt. Aechere Crump, the gunner, who was bleeding out from a cut on her thigh. The driver, Pfc. Victor Alamo, was pinned up front with a broken back.

"I pushed and pulled at my leg as hard as I could to get loose and felt a sharp tear," Maes said. "I thought I had dislodged my leg, but when I moved away, my leg was completely gone."

Freed from the pressure of the turret, the blood poured out of his wound at an alarming rate, but with other lives on the line, Maes pushed his panic and any thought of pain aside. He pulled himself up and into the back of the tank to grab a tourniquet from the medical kit. Halfway there, he began to feel lightheaded from the blood loss.

"I knew I was going into shock," he said. "All I could think about was no one knows we're down here. Either I step up or we all die."

Maes began shock procedures on himself — stay calm, keep heart rate down, elevate lower body — and cinched his belt into a makeshift tourniquet to slow down the heavy bleeding. He



COURTESY PHOTO

*Spc. Ezra Maes (left) works on his physical therapy under the direction of Candace Pellock, physical therapy assistant, Oct. 2 at the Center for the Intrepid, Brooke Army Medical Center's cutting-edge rehabilitation center on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.*

called out to Crump, who had staunched her own bleeding with a belt tourniquet, to radio for help.

Maes' heart sank when Crump said the radio wasn't working.

But then he heard an incredible sound; his cell phone was ringing.

Maes' phone was the only one that wasn't broken and the only one with working cell phone service. With one leg cut and the other broken, Crump crawled to reach Maes' phone and threw it down to him. He unlocked the phone and sent his friend a text. Help was on the way.

His last memory of that

location was his sergeant major running up the hill carrying his leg on his shoulder. "I wanted to keep it, see if it could be reattached, but it was pulverized," Maes recalled.

Maes, who had also broken his ankle, his pelvis in three places, and his shoulder, was rushed to a local hospital before being flown to Landstuhl, Germany, and then on to BAMC. Between an infection he picked up overseas and almost daily surgeries to fight it, he spent four months in intensive care.

"I feel super lucky," he said. "My crew all does. So many things could have gone wrong. Besides my leg, we all walked

away pretty much unscathed."

A year later, Maes is immersed in physical and occupational therapy at the Center for the Intrepid, BAMC's outpatient rehabilitation center.

This day, Maes is working out intensely with Candace Pellock, a physical therapy assistant. Against the backdrop of the hospital, Maes moves across gravel on crutches with an ever-present smile, despite the Texas heat and strain of balancing on uneven ground.

It's all in preparation to receive his long-term prosthetic leg through a cutting-edge procedure called osseointegration. For this procedure, not unlike a dental implant, BAMC surgeons will implant a titanium rod in the bone of Maes' residual limb, rather than a traditional socket, to attach the prosthesis.

While he was having a tough time emotionally before the accident, Maes now sees each day as a gift. It's a second chance he'd like to share with others who may be having a tough time post-injury or trauma.

"When something like this happens, it's easy to give up because your life won't be the same, and you're not wrong," he said. "Life will take a 180, but it doesn't have to be a bad thing. Don't let it hinder you from moving forward."

At 21, Maes has a new attitude and a new lease on life. With combat arms in the rearview mirror and inspired by the CFI's care, he plans to become a prosthetist and help others regain their mobility.

But what he doesn't plan to do is switch his phone service.

As he puts it, "My cell phone saved my life."

# Army North heads underground to train in NYC

By Sgt. Maj. Faith Laughter  
U.S. ARMY NORTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A chemical-laden bomb explodes in the Bowery subway station, changing hundreds of lives in an instant.

Through the dust and expansive line of dimly lit subway cars, loud wailing and sharp cries of pain are heard ringing through the vast underground tunnel system.

"I can't see!" yells a woman. Another moans, "It should have been me that died."

Medical and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear trained Soldiers join local New York city responders moving quickly to rescue and decontaminate the wounded. Luckily, for everyone involved, this frightening scenario is a skillfully crafted exercise overseen by the U.S. Army North Civil Support Training Activity.

The CSTA's mission is to conduct training and evaluation of units within the Defense Department's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear, or CBRN Response Enterprise, also known as CRE.

This particular training event was the culmination of a nine-month planning effort between the U.S. Army North CSTA; U.S. Army Reserve medical and CBRN units, which are response elements of U.S. Army North; Jacobi Hospital; N.Y. Fire Department Hazardous Material response section; N.Y. Fire Department Emergency Medical Services; N.Y. Police Department; and the New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

All of the hard work that went into planning the training created a unique joint exercise that tested the capability of all parties involved. Jeff Taylor, CSTA Team Chief, said, "It allows Soldiers and civilians who will respond to disasters the opportunity to train side-by-side, integrate their forces and hone their skills."

Honing her team's ability is



SGT. MAJ. FAITH LAUGHTER

*Members of the 413th Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear, or CBRN, Company, a U.S. Army Reserve unit from Florence, S.C., decontaminate a simulated casualty during a joint training exercise at Jacobi Hospital in New York City Sept. 28. The training was planned by the U.S. Army North Civil Support Training Activity.*

exactly what Natalia Polunin, commanding officer of the Hazardous and Tactical Response Battalion, part of FDNY EMS, is looking for.

"We want to practice our ability to get into the suits, our ability to operate in the suits and our ability to communicate to the hospital to deliver the message that they know in advance," she said. "It's the ability to see how we operate and transition from EMS patient care to hospital patient

care."

Role players within the scenario are given injury cards, and don moulage, or mock injuries, that add a layer of realism for the responders. While the scene is playing out in the subway, medical staff stand by at Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx, waiting to receive the patients that Polunin's EMS teams are transporting.

Janice Holloran, associate executive director of clinical operations at Jacobi Hospital

says, "This is a mass casualty incident that is explosive in nature. And for us, decontamination is probably the Achilles heel of all preparedness because nobody really likes to do it, and you have to constantly train for it and folks have to practice. Your staff is constantly changing, so you're never at the top of your game if you're not practicing this all the time."

Holloran added that she feels her team has to practice for the

things they don't do all the time in order to make sure they're prepared in the real world.

"Every single day we take care of high level traumas, multiple traumas, all day every day. That is our bread and butter and we are experts at it, but if I was just testing a mass casualty with a lot of injuries, I think I'm being disingenuous to my staff."

From the CSTA's perspective, testing the core competencies of the Defense Support of Civil Authorities in a CBRN response mission is just what they do.

"Its relationship building, negotiation, and agreements to meet in the middle so that all units and agencies involved can accomplish their training objectives," Taylor said.

Deanne Criswell, New York City Emergency Management Commissioner, echoes Taylor's sentiment about relationship building and said that getting to know each other in advance is critical to doing the job right.

"This type of an exercise is really about building those relationships ahead of time so we know what each other's capabilities are, what our strengths are, what equipment we bring; so in the event that we have to respond to something like this, we have already met each other and have a comfort with each other, because that is what is going to be the key to our success," she said.

This is the first time the CSTA, Jacobi Hospital, and MTA have participated in this type of joint training effort together.

To Criswell, the benefits of bringing everyone together now will pay off in later.

"You know it's interoperability from a technical side, but it's also the relationship building side too and just having the knowledge of who is here, who do we call on, so we don't have to exchange a business card at the [actual] event."



# Army North to highlight mission at 2019 AUSA meeting

By Capt. Desiree Randle  
U.S. ARMY NORTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Are you curious about the current state and future plans of the U.S. Army? Mark your calendar to tune into livestream panel discussions from the 2019 Association of the United States Army annual meeting in Washington, D.C., Oct. 14-16.

AUSA, an educational and professional development association that serves the U.S. Army, organizes the forum to feature Army capabilities and provide informative and relevant presentations on all things Army for governmental, academic, civic and veteran audiences.

Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson, Army North commanding general, will join two panel discussions during the AUSA meeting. The Multi-Domain Homeland Defense panel will highlight Army North's top priority, homeland defense. After opening comments by David P. Pekoske, the Department of Homeland Security's acting Deputy Secretary, the discussion will focus on the Army's defense of the nation at home across several domains — ground, cyber, and space, to be ready for today's threats while investing in modernization and readiness for tomorrow.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security Theresa Whelan, U.S. Northern Command deputy commander



KAREN LLOYD

Vice Adm. Michael J. Dumont, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command commander Lt. Gen. James Dickinson, and Cyber National Mission Force deputy commander Maj. Gen. Stephen Hager will join Richardson in discussing how the Army is postured to defend the homeland.

*Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson, Army North Commanding General, will join two panel discussions during the annual AUSA meeting, which takes place Oct. 14-16.*

The second panel, America's Disaster Response: The Army's Preparedness for a Complex Catastrophe, will be co-hosted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The discussion will detail the importance of unity of effort between the Army and local, state and federal partners during a complex disaster response.

Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistant Administrator of Response Directorate Damon Penn, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Integration and DSCA Robert G. Saleses, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Commander Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite and Lt. Gen. Richardson will discuss how the Army should evolve to respond to complex catastrophes in the United States.

As the Army component of U.S. Northern Command, Army North protects the homeland and its approaches through three main mission sets: homeland defense, defense support of civil authorities and theater security cooperation with the militaries of Canada and Mexico. Coined the "Strength of the Nation," Army North collaborates with intergovernmental partners to plan, prepare, and protect the nation from an array of threats and hazards, securing the safety of the American people and key infrastructure.

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*To see the general speak at AUSA's meeting, livestream panel discussions at <https://www.dvidshub.net/webcast>.*



# Stop the Bleed program provides training to area schools

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Medical personnel from Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston are providing training to area school districts that must comply with a new state law that requires that teachers, staff members and students be trained in the treatment of injuries in the event of an emergency.

Trauma physicians, nurses and medics from the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research and Brooke Army Medical Center, both located at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, are instructing personnel in area school districts on the basics of treating a bleeding wound through the Stop the Bleed program.

Stop the Bleed is a Department of Defense initiative that raises the awareness of basic actions the public can use to stop life-threatening bleeding and save lives, according to bleeding-control.org.

"The objective of Stop the Bleed is to give people the skills, training and knowledge of proper bleeding control," said Brandy Martinez, BAMC Trauma Injury Prevention Coordinator, registered nurse and course instructor.

The new state law, known as House Bill 496, requires that school districts and charter schools provide bleeding control stations for use in the event of a traumatic injury in which there is blood loss. The stations must be stored in easily accessible areas of school campuses and must include equipment to treat a bleeding injury such as tourniquets, chest seals,

compression and bleeding control bandages.

The law also requires that school personnel take a training course on the skills they will need to use at a bleeding control station in treating an injury. School districts must meet the requirements of the law by Jan. 1, 2020.

Martinez said school personnel who participate in the training are learning the basics from the Bleeding Control for the Injured course, which has been offered to local community members and area schools, hospitals, organizations and businesses since January 2018.

The course covers the ABCs of bleeding control: alert, bleeding and compression, and the proper bleeding control techniques, including how to compress a wound, pack a wound and applying a tourniquet while practicing on a hands-on skill station.

She said the course has a full hour of training and that participants are given the opportunity to ask questions and comment on what they have learned.

Since the first Bleeding Control course started at BAMC in January 2018, Martinez said the Stop the Bleed program has been proactive in provid-

ing training to area school districts. The program has provided training to more than 2,000 school staff members in approximately 30 schools, in a 22-county trauma service area of South Texas that is covered by BAMC, the only Level 1 Trauma Center within the Department of Defense.

There are 25 instructors from USAISR and BAMC who go into the local community to help teach the Bleeding Control course.

Dr. John Kragh, USAISR Department of Damage Control Resuscitation orthopedic surgeon and researcher, is one of the course instructors. He is a world renowned expert on the usage and effectiveness of tourniquets in the treatment of bleeding injuries.

In August, Kragh was among eight instructors who provided training to school personnel, including teachers and nurses of the Somerset Independent School District near San Antonio.

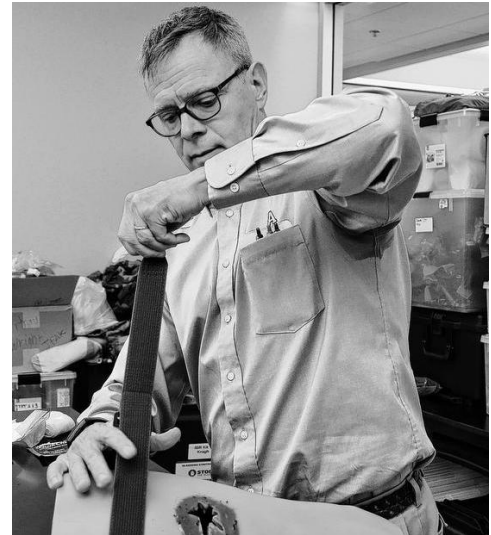
Kragh said the Stop the Bleed training in Somerset was held at the same time the school did its active shooter training among staff. He said the school personnel, which included teachers and nurses, were eager to learn and receptive to the

training.

"The audience was very engaging and asked questions," Kragh said. "They participated very well in the skill station. These people were particularly interested. The need for it, the risk of having such an incident (active shooter) and the readiness and preparation to deal with it I think were all cited by the speakers and were easily understood by the workforce."

Kragh said it is important to provide training to school communities on bleeding control because they will be better prepared to react in an emergency.

"If you're not ready, you're not ready," he said. "If you're ready, you save a life. The time to get ready is now."



DAVID DEKUNDER

*Dr. John Kragh, U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Department of Damage Control Resuscitation orthopedic surgeon and researcher, demonstrates the proper technique for packing a bleeding wound.*

# Army Medicine's NCO Academy welcomes new commandant

By Jose E. Rodriguez  
U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF  
EXCELLENCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoE, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston hosted a Noncommissioned Officer Academy, or NCOA, change of commandant ceremony Oct. 2, where Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Earle became the 15th NCOA Commandant, assuming the post from Command Sgt. Maj. Napoleon Noguera-Payan.

Maj. Gen. Patrick D. Sargent, MEDCoE commanding general, officiated over the ceremony that was conducted at the Army Medicine Museum.

Noguera-Payan has been an inspirational leader at the NCOA for the last three years and had a distinguished 30-year Army career, with service in various other leadership positions in mechanized infantry, light infantry and armor units.

Earle comes to the NCOA with a breadth of experience having served at numerous stateside and overseas assignments. His most recent position was serving as the Sergeant Major for the Army Medical Department Personnel Proponent Directorate, or APPD.

"This is a change of responsibility, not simply a change of authority," Sargent said. "Today, we pay tribute to Command Sgt. Maj. Noguera. This is a Soldier who has led the NCOA with honor and distinction for the past three years," Sargent said. "Simply put, Napoleon is one of the most well-rounded, forward-leaning, and high-performing leaders I have worked with in my 34 years."

Noguera-Payan reflected on his impoverished childhood as the youngest of 13 children in Nicaragua. He spoke of his mother who didn't know how to read or write but made him go to school, even when they couldn't afford shoes for his

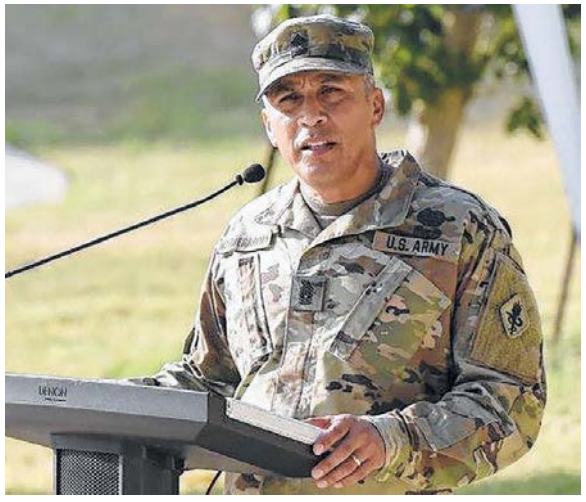
feet, and how he grew up working in fields to afford money to eat.

"But I tell you this not to feel sorry for me, but because that taught me a valuable lesson," Noguera-Payan said. "That taught me the meaning of an honest day's work, of humility, and appreciating the good things in life."

"I forever have a debt of gratitude to have the opportunity that I've had here to serve in the United States Army," he said. "To be a leader in the most lethal Army in the world."

Noguera-Payan told his successor that he didn't need to focus on "filling shoes" because assuming the commandant position was not about what the person before him has accomplished. "It's about developing NCOs that are agile, adaptable and flexible, that understand mission command so that they can make decisions on their own."

During his remarks, Earle thanked Sargent and MEDCoE



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Earle gives remarks during the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence change of responsibility ceremony Oct. 2 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

Command Sgt. Maj. William O'Neal for their faith and confidence in his leadership potential to lead such a diverse and stalwart organization.

"Over the past few weeks I've had the opportunity to meet the truly amazing NCOs, civilians and contractors that go above and beyond each day

to make our NCO Academy the premier organization that it is," Earle said. "Sgt. Maj. Noguera-Payan, in your comments you asked a question of how we are going to represent those Soldiers that came before us. I can tell you we are going to do it well, I promise you that."

# Army ROTC cadets represent at UTSA-Army football game

Army ROTC cadets from the University of Texas at San Antonio's Roadrunner Battalion, 5th Brigade Army ROTC, participate in the first-ever UTSA vs. Army Military Appreciation Game Sept. 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio.



DANIELLE AVINGTON

By Danielle Avington  
5TH BRIGADE, U.S. ARMY  
CADET COMMAND

Army ROTC cadets from the University of Texas at San Antonio's Roadrunner Battalion, 5th Brigade Army ROTC, participated in the first-ever UTSA vs. Army Military Appreciation Game Sept. 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

During pre-game festivities, UTSA Army ROTC cadets had the opportunity to interact and speak with attendees about Army ROTC programs. It wasn't just about sharing what Army ROTC programs had to offer though, it was also a chance for cadets to listen to veterans and their stories of

being Soldiers, as well as talking with people of all ages and building connections within their community.

The game-day experience consisted of a variety of events to highlight and honor the military, such as the 323rd Army Band's pre-game performance, junior ROTC performances throughout the game and the Black Daggers Air Assault Team.

The opening game coin toss was conducted by Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson, commanding general for U.S. Army North ( Fifth Army) at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

For more information about Army ROTC, visit [goarmy.com/rotc](http://goarmy.com/rotc).



# BAMC honors Fisher House founder

By Daniel J. Calderón

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brooke Army Medical Center staff, patients and beneficiaries took to the field just outside two of BAMC's Fisher Houses at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston to hold a Founder's Day Celebration Sept. 20 to honor Zachary Fisher, who initiated the Fisher House program in 1990.

"Today, we remember a true gentleman who really embraced the military and dedicated himself to supporting the troops and their families," said Inge K. Godfrey, BAMC Fisher House manager.

Godfrey has been with the Fisher House for 27 years. Staff at each installation with a Fisher House can choose how

to commemorate Founder's Day, which is timed to closely coincide with Zachary Fisher's birthday. This year's event marks the 26th annual celebration Godfrey has held at BAMC.

"This is our way of giving back to the volunteers, to the military here, and to the BAMC staff," Godfrey said. "We get great support from all the BAMC staff — the military, the civil service and the contractors."

Dave Rios, a local radio icon in San Antonio, served as the master of ceremonies for the event. The celebration opened with the BAMC color guard posting the colors.

Air Force veteran Brenná Parker, who once toured with the Air Force's Tops in Blue performance ensemble, performed the national anthem during the ceremony.



JASON W. EDWARDS

*Volunteers from the Young Farmers of Gonzales, Texas, serve guests at the Brooke Army Medical Center Fisher House's 26th Annual Founder's Day Celebration at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Sept. 20.*

The Young Farmers of Gonzales, Texas, served more than 1,400 pounds of brisket and more than 800 pounds of sausage; and organizations from around San Antonio were on hand to help serve the meals.

"When people walk into a Fisher House, we want them to know that people care about them," said Dave Coker, Fisher

House Foundation president.

"This reminds us of why we are here. We're here to take care of the families of our greatest national treasure — the U.S. military. And nobody does it better than Inge."

BAMC has four Fisher Houses on its campus. The first opened its doors in 1992; the second in 1995; and the two closest to the Center for the

Intrepid opened in 2007. Military and veteran families can stay in any of the Fisher Houses free of charge while their loved one is at BAMC.

There are currently 84 Fisher Houses around the world with seven more in the works over the course of the next year. Since their inception, more than 368,000 families have stayed at a Fisher House.

"It's been a blessing," said Donna Lowery, who was the longest steady resident at the BAMC Fisher House.

Her husband is a retired Coast Guardsman. During her hospitalization, she developed sepsis which led to the surgical amputation of all four extremities. She and her husband lived at the Fisher House from September 2014 through August 2019.

"I am grateful for the people here, the volunteers who come out, and for everyone who supports the Fisher House," Lowery said. "I never would have been able to receive the treatment I needed had it not been for the Fisher House."

## MICC contracts underpin readiness efforts of the Army

By Daniel P. Elkins

MISSION AND INSTALLATION CONTRACTING  
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Contracting professionals from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command executed contract actions in support of Army commands, installations and activities across the country through the final hours of Sept. 30, culminating a government fiscal year committed to optimizing mission partner readiness.

The MICC executed 29,540 contract actions valued at \$5,408,301,169 while also administering 461,978 Government Purchase Card transactions worth an additional \$748,705,404 for the fiscal year. In addition to the contract actions awarded this fiscal year, the MICC administered approximately 8,200 contracts valued at almost \$22 billion in support of Soldiers and their families.

"The successes of our contracting and support professionals across the MICC are truly measured in our

victories as an Army, the achievements of our Soldiers, and the well-being of their families," said Brig. Gen. Christine Beeler, MICC commanding general.

"From installation support to strategic power projection, sustaining and maintaining Army readiness is our singular focus."

The MICC also met all five of its small-business socioeconomic goals in fiscal 2019 for the fifth consecutive year. Contract actions awarded to American small businesses totaled almost \$2.5 billion. The MICC Small Business Programs workforce consists of professionals around the country representing small-business interests. They conduct outreach events to inform industry representatives of forecasted installation requirements to ensure their maximum opportunity to compete for Army contracts.

The command continued to experience success at rapidly meeting its mission partner needs through the Simplified Acquisition Threshold Supply Procurement Program, or

S2P2. The e-commerce technology designed to deliver supplies to Soldiers saw a 25% increase in dollars obligated this fiscal year over last year.

Driving that increase is the program's capability of drastically reducing the procurement action lead time, or PALT, to an average of one day for delivery. Approximately 2,500 actions valued at more than \$100 million were obligated through the online marketplace managed by the MICC contracting office at Fort Drum, New York.

Anthony Sligar, the deputy to the commander for the 925th Contracting Battalion at Fort Drum, said the reverse auction process saved their supported mission partners more than \$16 million for use toward other mission priorities.

In preparation for the increase in anticipated contract requirements at the end of the fiscal year, a team of MICC personnel formed a war room in June at its JBSA headquarters. The MICC commanding general praised the

war room team for monitoring the command's contracting operations in real time.

Terry Lazenby, who directed the war room, said her team was focused on providing business guidance and year-end closeout assistance to the command's two brigades and two field directorate offices as well as served as the hub for year-end reporting, workload distribution and execution of issue resolution between requiring activities.

Support provided by the war room included the execution of approximately \$636 million in contract requirements throughout the final two weeks in support of the Installation Management Command, the MICC's largest mission partner.

Headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, the Mission and Installation Contracting Command consists of about 1,500 military and civilian members who are responsible for contracting goods and services in support of Soldiers.

# LACKLAND

## Air Force graduates first fully religiously accommodated Sikh Airman

By 1st Lt. Kayshel Trudell

37TH TRAINING WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The first Sikh Airmen granted full religious accommodations starting from basic military training through technical training graduated from the 343rd Training Squadron's Security Forces apprentice course here Sept. 26.

Airman Sunjit Rathour graduated from BMT June 13, as the first trainee to complete the 8½-week training with permission to wear a turban with uncut beard, uncut hair, necklace and bracelet in observation of his Sikh faith. This accommodation remained through his participation in the Security Forces apprentice course and will continue during his time as an active duty Airman.

Rathour submitted an official request for pre-accession religious accommodation to Air Education and Training Command's Manpower, Personnel and Services office and was granted permission via official memorandum Dec. 21, 2018.

"I'm thrilled that the Air Force gave me the opportunity to complete both basic and technical training with a religious accommodation," Rathour said. "My fellow airmen and superiors have been nothing but supportive, and I look forward to continuing my service for years to come."

The Air Force places a high value on the rights of its members to observe the tenets of their respective religions or to observe no religion at all. The Air Force is dedicated to maintaining an environment in which people can realize their highest potential regardless of personal religious or other beliefs.

Chaplains often act as counselors, advisers and facilitators and are a resource available to all Airmen. Like all trainees, Rathour had access to chaplains during BMT and technical

training. As part of his religious accommodation, the chaplain's office arranged for Rathour to attend services at a local Sikh temple during technical school.

A group of local Sikhs from the Sikh Dharamsal of San Antonio also attended the graduation to show support for Rathour and celebrate this historic moment for Sikhs who wish to serve in the military.

The Rathour family is laced with service in both the United States military and law enforcement. Members from his immediate family have served in the Army and Navy and have retired from or currently serve as members of the New York City Police Department.

"From day one it was obvious Airman Rathour is passionate about the security forces career field," said Master Sgt. Justin Consley, 343rd TRS apprentice course instructor. "He had heart and determination throughout all 65 days of training and has proved himself as a valuable asset to our Air Force and worthy addition to the Defender family."

Security Forces is the largest enlisted career field in the Air Force, with approximately 38,000 Security Forces Airmen defending 120 bases around the globe. 2019 has been declared the Year of the Defender.

Next, Airmen Rathour will participate in the Recruiter's Assistance Program, or RAP. He then reports to his first assignment at the 374th Security Forces Squadron, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

For more information on RAP, visit, <https://www.recruiting.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/931830/recruiter-assistance-program-rap/>.

Airmen can seek guidance or clarification on any religious freedom or accommodation questions through their chain of command, wing chaplain or their Equal Opportunity Office.

**"I'm thrilled that the Air Force gave me the opportunity to complete both basic and technical training with a religious accommodation. My fellow airmen and superiors have been nothing but supportive, and I look forward to continuing my service for years to come."**

Airman Sunjit Rathour



Airman Sunjit Rathour graduated from Basic Military Training June 13 as the first trainee to complete the 8½-week training with permission to wear a turban with uncut beard, uncut hair, necklace and bracelet in observation of his Sikh faith.



# 149th FW Air Guardsman, single mother talks resilience

By Capt. Nadine Wiley De Moura  
TEXAS JOINT COUNTERDRUG TASK FORCE

Frozen in what one can only describe as a nightmare, Staff Sgt. Kimberly Gaona clenched the hand of Kiyana, her 13-year-old daughter, in a hospital room and held back tears as she faced the harrowing reality that no parent wishes to face.

The doctor and a nurse entered the room and delivered the news: “She has cancer.”

“It was like a freight train,” Gaona said. “It will just stop you in your tracks when you hear those words about your kid.”

Sitting behind her daughter, Gaona, a Texas National Guard Joint Counterdrug Task Force Ground Reconnaissance Detachment operator and a medic with the 149th Medical Group, 6th Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package, 149th Airlift Wing, Texas Air National Guard, wouldn't let her daughter see the emotion in her face.

Instead, she collected herself, stepped out of the hospital room and notified her friend and mentor in the counterdrug program of the news.

Gaona, 43, a divorced mother of four, also notified Kiyana's father of the news.

“Acute Myeloid Leukemia is a cancer of the blood, is produced in the bone, which is everywhere in the body,” Gaona said. “So that was scary to hear about how to treat it if it is everywhere.”

“We were fortunate, only 20 percent of her body was consumed by cancer. She did great the first three months — the last chemotherapy treatment was brutal.”

Kiyana, who turned 14 while being treated for AML in the hospital, fought for her life as she underwent several allergic reactions, fevers and pneumonia from the transfusions.

“She didn't see me cry and I did not let her,” Gaona said. “She wanted to understand, so from a medical standpoint I helped her understand what was happening and it helped her.”

Gaona used her medical training from the Air Force to decipher information about her daughter's cancer and follow along with the charts.

“It was definitely a different world in oncology. I could hear the treatment plan and the X-rays every day,” Gaona said. “When it wasn't good, I wouldn't tell her, but it was peace of mind from



Staff Sgt. Kimberly Gaona, a Texas National Guard Joint Counterdrug Task Force Ground Reconnaissance Detachment operator and medic with the 149th Medical Group, 6th Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package, 149th Airlift Wing, Texas Air National Guard at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, smiles next to her daughter, Kiyana, while in the hospital.

my medical training to know what was going on.”

As Kiyana entered remission, Gaona reflected on her ability to remain resilient throughout such a distressful experience.

“I don't know that I have had to use that level of fortitude before — someone had to do it,” Gaona said. “If you are strong for people who are not, it gives them hope, and mentally I don't think she ever thought about not fighting even though there were days where she just felt horrible.”

Kiyana, who trained and ruck marched with her mother just days before her cancer diagnosis, drew on her mother's grit to overcome her circumstances. Even at her lowest moments, on an incubator, she refused to be sedated throughout the process.

“We don't know when to stop,” Gaona said. “If you know how to stop or even think it, then you will. But if that's not something in your mindset, then you won't stop, you'll just keep going.”

“She is strong and driven. She is amazing, brilliant and beautiful.”

Although she said that nothing could have prepared her for this experience, this was not the first time in Gaona's life that she persevered in the face of

adversity.

Gaona, an adoptee, forged a path of defying the odds when she enlisted in the Texas Air National Guard at the cutoff age of 39.

Shortly after completing her initial trainings, she became the first female to complete the Texas National Guard Counterdrug Ground Reconnaissance Operators Training Course and work as an operator on a team.

The course is a test of physical and mental exertion, with 4 a.m. wake-ups and grueling workouts. All operators must pass the Army Physical Fitness Test, adhering to the male age 17-21 bracket maximum scores, complete a 12-mile ruck march and run 5 miles in 40 minutes.

“She is an operator and is exactly what I would expect of my team,” said Maj. Robert Cowart, Texas National Guard Ground Reconnaissance officer-in-charge. “We have high standards. Everybody's character is good, and goes above and beyond. If they don't, they can't stay here — Gaona keeps up there with the team.”

Ground Reconnaissance operators are trained to work in stressful and highly sensitive environments employing bucket truck operations, tower climbing, and photography and radio skills to support law enforcement agents on highly sensitive missions.

“We conduct the Operator Training Course because we are looking for resilient professional Soldiers and Airmen who can be trusted in autonomous situations and have the conditioning and trust to make necessary decisions,” Cowart said.

The culminating exercise is a three-day land navigation course across several thousand acres, carrying a rucksack with some food, water and a compass.

“I had to do a 72-hour course and find some points in 72 hours and we weren't allowed to sleep,” Gaona said. “That alone, I think, it was a big part of me being able to handle what happened afterwards. I had been doing my job as an operator for six months when Kiyana was diagnosed with cancer.”

Gaona said that the trust and relationships that she built while working on the Counterdrug program were coupled with invaluable support throughout Kiyana's treatment.

“Change is always happening and those same people who were my support

in the Counterdrug program, all of them, were huge supporters and showed up at the hospital within days,” Gaona said.

Gaona continued to work between hospital visits and go into work early in the morning to complete necessary tasks and check up on her Counterdrug teammates.

“She is an endearing person,” said Master Sgt. Ruben Hernandez, her Counterdrug and Air National Guard mentor. “Every time I was visiting her, we would focus on Kiyana, then she would immediately ask how the team was. For me, that is a testament to her character — she is adamant about helping others.”

Hernandez, who also assisted in recruiting Gaona into the Texas Air National Guard, reflected on Gaona as an asset to the Counterdrug team.

“All of her charm that comes with her attributes, her knowledge of environmental considerations,” Hernandez said. “She offers a unique dichotomy to the team. As far as acclimation to the team, she has done well; she is a 40-plus-year-old mom of our. There is not a whole lot she has been through that she can't offer or share light on.”

While her daughter's cancer was the pinnacle of Gaona's life challenges, there were many others.

“She has had some pretty significant life challenges,” Hernandez said. “She experienced death in the family pretty young, marriage, kids, owning a business and probably more life experiences than any adult woman that I have met in my life.”

Regardless of the hurdles she faced prior to joining the military, Gaona doesn't back down and never stops giving.

“She didn't expect any exemptions; she showed and gave it all she got,” Hernandez said. “The biggest impact has been her being an outlier to the small community here — Green Berets and Ranger guys — and proving herself as a female, as a Soldier and a person as a whole.”

“She has had a huge impact and changed the dynamics in our community, and just a different respect for how we carry ourselves. It's a great sense of pride that not only do we have a female working with us but she fell in with the team.”

Despite the hardships that Gaona

**RESILIENCE continues on 16**

# No effort spared to bring home wounded Soldier

By Alexandra Soika  
AIR MOBILITY COMMAND  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

More than four days, three aircraft, 18 medical specialists, more than 24,000 gallons of fuel, and 100 liters of blood were committed across an 8,000-mile journey to a single goal — saving the life of one Soldier.

In mid-August, Air Mobility Command's 618th Air Operations Center was notified of an injured Soldier in need of urgent aeromedical evacuation out of Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Immediately, AOC Airmen started to build a mission — REACH 797 — to help save this one Soldier whose survival was in question after being critically wounded in a blast.

Within the first hours of the Soldier's arrival to the Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram Airfield, medical teams administered multiple blood transfusions, and a lead surgeon determined the Soldier was in need of a special team from Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

To form this team, the 455th Expeditionary Medical Group worked in concert with the Enroute Patient Staging System, known as ERPSS. This flight comes from a specialized section in the hospital with personnel who are experts in patient movement and coordinate their transport out of the area to receive more specialized care.

During those critical days following the injury, the surgical services team at Bagram performed multiple lifesaving and stabilizing surgeries. Additionally, a walking blood bank was initiated and over 100 Soldiers lined up to donate within 15 minutes of the call to ensure a sufficient supply of blood.

"Their quick work led to the patient being taken to a higher echelon of care in under 48 hours," said Maj. Lisa Haik,



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS RYAN MANCUSO

455th ERPSS Flight commander. "Overall, the actions of all involved represent just a fraction of what the CJTH can provide to our warriors."

Twenty-four hours later, after being diverted from another mission, a Dover Air Force Base C-17 Globemaster III and its crew arrived at Bagram and immediately went into crew rest in preparation to fly a non-stop, 8,000-mile flight to San Antonio.

"We had to load up a very complex flight plan into the software on the aircraft," said Maj. Dan Kudlacz, REACH 797 C-17 pilot and aircraft commander from Dover's 436th Airlift Wing. "Couple that with the fact that we were flying into a combat zone, carrying 18 additional medical crew members, and transporting a critical patient whose injuries require a cabin altitude restriction. You can begin to see that there was a lot to manage from alert to liftoff."

The next day, the Soldier was evacuated out of Afghanistan on the C-17 for the long journey home and was treated by Aeromedical Evacuation and Critical Care Air Transport Team or CCATT Airmen from the 10th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Flight, alongside an Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation or ECMO team from the 59th Medical Wing at JBSA-Lackland.

"There were so many moving parts to this mission that we knew we had to get every aspect 100 percent correct the first time," Kudlacz said. "Should one thing have fallen out of line during the flight, it could have ... impacted this Soldier's life, which is something that weighed heavily on all of us when we received notification of this mission."

During the flight, the Soldier was treated by Aeromedical Evacuation and Critical Care Air Transport Team or CCATT

Airmen from the 10th EAEF, alongside an Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation or ECMO team from the 59th MDW, which was prepared to assist should breathing problems arise.

Just hours into the flight from Bagram, a MacDill KC-135 Stratotanker crew was preparing for a routine mission from the tarmac at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, Great Britain, when they got the call to rendezvous with and offload more than 24,000 gallons of fuel to keep a life-saving C-17 airborne during its non-stop AE journey from Afghanistan to Texas.

"MacDill Airmen fueled the hands that heal during this critical mission," said Col. Stephen Snelson, 6th Air Mobility Wing commander. "Days where we can flex to support our joint teammates reminds us why we signed up to serve in the first place."

As the topped-off C-17 pulled

*A critical care air transport team tends to a patient during a nearly 20-hour direct flight from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, to San Antonio on Aug. 18.*

away from the KC-135 in the skies over Europe, a second MacDill tanker crew, near Bangor, Maine, was diverted to complete the air bridge to Texas.

Although refueling during an AE flight is uncommon due to the turbulence it can cause, it was necessary to ensure the Soldier reached specialized care in the United States as quickly as possible.

"This mission involved a tremendous amount of teamwork; between the skill of the aircrews operating under exhausting conditions, to our AOC planners who determined aircraft and aircrew availability, provided mission support and tailored specialized AE care en-route, and the medical professionals who provided unrivaled critical care," said Brig. Gen. Jimmy Canlas, 618th AOC commander. "With a Soldier's life on the line, these Airmen worked 24/7, across multiple time zones, to pull together all the pieces and ensure this Soldier made it home."

Following the non-stop, 20-hour journey, the injured Soldier reached JBSA-Kelly Field. From there, he was transported to Brooke Army Medical Center to continue receiving life-saving care — and reunite with his family.

"Everyone working around the clock to safely bring our patriots home is awe-inspiring," Snelson said. "This mission was a demonstration of the promises we make to care for those who serve."

The Soldier, whose name is being withheld due to personal and family privacy, is currently receiving intensive care in San Antonio.

"The priority our military places on saving the lives of its service members is unparalleled," said Lt Col Scott King, CCATT Chief. "REACH 797 demonstrates that for those who go into harm's way, no expense or effort will be spared to bring them home to their families and loved ones."



# Air Force on schedule with new uniform issue timeline

By Lemitchel King

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Trainees entering into Basic Military Training, or BMT, at the 37th Training Wing this week are the first group to be issued the new Operational Camouflage Pattern, or OCP, uniforms.

After taking Airmen feedback into consideration, the uniform board members said they chose the OCP for the improved fit and comfort and so that they will blend in with their soldier counterparts' uniforms in the joint environments, according to Cooper.

When Air Force officials announced last year they are adopting the Army OCP as the official utility uniform, they developed a three-year roll-out timeline across the force for the entire change over. This week puts them on target for issuing to the newest members.

"Each trainee is issued four sets of uniforms with their initial issue," said Bernadette Cline, clothing issue supervisor. "Trainees who are here in ABUs (Airmen Battle Uniforms) will continue to wear them throughout their time here, and will be replaced when they get their clothing allowance."

The 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron Initial Issue Clothing outfits nearly 33,000 BMT trainees every year and maintains more than 330,000 clothing line items.

"We partner with Defense Logistics Agency, who provides the clothing items

upfront to be issued," said Donald Cooper, Air Force initial clothing issue chief. "Then we warehouse and issue to the individuals size-specific clothing."

The OCP was chosen because its form will allow airmen to do their jobs easier, it fits in alongside soldiers in the field and functions well in the joint environment.

"Right now, if someone deploys, they'll get it issued," Cline said, "Now that everyone is converting over to this uniform, they [the trainees] already have the uniform to work and deploy in."

Following the timeline, the OCP should now be available online for purchase as well.

The next mandatory change listed on the timeline, to take place by June 1, 2020, will be the Airmen's boots, socks, T-shirts, U.S. Flag and officer ranks to the spice brown or tan color.

Switching from two different types of utility uniforms to just one, multifunction uniform could also simplify life for the airmen.

"I think the biggest value is going to be the thought that they aren't required to have two uniforms anymore once they convert to a uniform that is for deployment and day-to-day work," Cooper said.

For more information on uniform guidance, visit <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Dress-and-Appearance/>.



SARAYUTH PINTHONG

Cecil Harvey, 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron lead supply technician, assists a U.S. Air Force basic military training trainee, 326th Training Squadron, during the initial issue of the first operational camouflage pattern uniform Oct. 2 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

## RESILIENCE

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faced during her lifetime and more recently, she continues to inspire her family, her military community and now the bodybuilding community.

With her daughter's improving health, Gaona, true to her creed, will not stop pushing herself to be the best she can be.

For the past eight months, working around appointments, work commitments, and her motherly duties, Gaona has been preparing to compete in a national bodybuilding competition in October.

"She is tough as nails —

that's the best way to describe her," said Ivan Meraz, founder of Team Hard Bodies Austin and Gaona's competition coach. "She is mentally strong. That's what bodybuilding is all about."

Gaona's current regime includes two hours of cardio a day, one hour of weights a day, and six to seven meals a day while juggling her personal and professional life.

"The lady shows up, man," said Meraz, who is a coach and competitor who has worked in the bodybuilding industry for more than 20 years.

"She is a great person, she is very giving. She is always asking me how I am doing when she is the one going through the hard time.

"What I love the most about her is that she shows up and she is tough as nails and I have basically done everything I have to build her and she has answered to that. No complaints, no whining, no questions."

If Gaona wins the first round of the competition, she will go on to compete at the national professional level.

"I wanted a challenge after I got through the Ground Reconnaissance Operators Training Course," Gaona said.

"I have to push for something better. Life has taught me that. I don't want my kids to think mediocre is OK. If you have more to give, give it."

While pushing through the

final week of her preparation for the competition, Gaona's energy levels plunge as her diet becomes more restrictive, and now, she looks to her daughter and her kids for inspiration.

"Look at Kiyana ... she has no idea what she accomplished last year," Gaona said. "That kid fought for her life. She has no idea how strong she is. I hope that I was part of what pushed her through."

All of her children are following after her example. Gaona's oldest son enlisted in the Army. Her second oldest is at medical school in Ohio, and the youngest two are still in high school.

"I tell my kids 'don't be a victim. Don't be a follower.

Make your path,' " Gaona said. "Do what you want; don't let anyone tell you can't do it unless you have tried."

As for her future, in typical Gaona fashion, there is no end in sight.

Along with re-enlisting for another six years, she has enrolled in school to finish her associate degree of science in nursing and plans to apply for the Interservice Physician Assistant Program at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston to become a physician assistant.

"Always stay humble, because the world will make you humble," Gaona said. "Never forget your dreams. You always have to have goals. There is always more."

# RANDOLPH

## The color purple sheds light on domestic violence

By Robert Goetz

502D AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Five buildings at Joint Base San Antonio are bathed in purple light each night this month, a reminder to the base community of violent acts that tear families and relationships apart and often have a ripple effect that lasts through the victim's lifetime.

Purple is the color of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which is observed each October to "bring awareness to an issue that does not discriminate," said Angela Nance, JBSA-Randolph Family Advocacy Program intervention specialist.

"Domestic violence is any

violent act committed by one person against another in a marriage or intimate partner relationship," she said. "No matter your socioeconomic status, educational background, gender, race, age, color, religion, sexual orientation or rank, you can be a victim or offender."

In addition to the illumination of the JBSA buildings in purple — the water tower and Military Entrance Processing Station at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, the 37th Training Wing headquarters and Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at JBSA-Lackland and the Taj Mahal at JBSA-Randolph — this month's focus on domestic violence will

COLOR PURPLE continues on 18



JOEL MARTINEZ

*The Taj Mahal at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph is illuminated in purple throughout October in observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.*

## Air Force unveils the newest Red Tail: The T-7A Red Hawk

From Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

The Air Force's all-new advanced trainer aircraft, the T-X, has officially been named the T-7A Red Hawk.

Acting Secretary of the Air Force Matthew Donovan made the announcement during his speech at the 2019 Air Force Association's Air, Space and Cyber Conference in National Harbor Sept. 16.

Donovan was joined on stage by one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, Col. Charles McGee, who flew more than 400 combat missions in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Also seated in the audience were members

of the East Coast Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen.

After a short video highlighting the aircraft's lineage, Donovan said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the newest Red Tail!" A drape was then lifted to reveal a quarter-scale model of a T-7A Red Hawk painted in a distinct, red-tailed color scheme.

"The name Red Hawk honors the legacy of Tuskegee Airmen and pays homage to their signature red-tailed aircraft from World War II," Donovan said. "The name is also a tribute to the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk, an American fighter aircraft that first flew in 1938 and was flown by the 99th Fighter

Squadron, the U.S. Army Air Forces' first African American fighter squadron."

The Tuskegee Airmen subsequently painted their Republic P-47 Thunderbolts and North American P-51 Mustangs with a red-tailed paint scheme.

The T-7A Red Hawk, manufactured by Boeing, introduces capabilities that prepare pilots for fifth-generation fighters, including high-G environment, information and sensor management, high angle of attack flight characteristics, night operations and transferable air-to-air and air-to-ground skills.

"The T-7A will be the staple of a new generation of aircraft," Donovan said. "The Red Hawk offers advanced capabilities for training tomorrow's pilots on data links, simulated radar, smart weapons, defensive management systems, as well as synthetic training capabilities."

Along with updated technology and performance capabilities, the T-7A will be accompanied by enhanced simulators and the ability to update system software faster and more seamlessly. The plane was also designed with maintainers in mind by utilizing easy-to-reach and easy-to-open access panels.

The T-7A features twin tails,

slats and big leading-edge root extensions that provide deft handling at low speeds, allowing it to fly in a way that better approximates real world demands and is specifically designed to prepare pilots for fifth-generation aircraft. The aircraft's single engine generates nearly three times more thrust than the dual engines of the T-38C Talon which it is replacing.

The first T-7A aircraft and simulators are scheduled to arrive at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, in 2023. All undergraduate pilot training bases will eventually transition from the T-38C to the T-7A.



# 340th FTG volunteers help abused women, children

By Janis El Shabazz

340TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

More than 70,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen daily answer their nation's call, including the men and women assigned to the Headquarters, 340th Flying Training Group at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

Far more than “weekend warriors,” they are vital contributors to the mission, and to the civilian communities where they live and serve. A perfect example of community service was their recent support of the Family Violence Prevention Services/Battered Women and Children's Shelter's 42-year legacy of delivering life-changing services to San Antonio victims.

According to Marta Pelaez, FVPS president and CEO, one in three women will be affected by domestic violence in Texas, and more than half of the people helped by the BWCS are children.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health, people in

abusive relationships often attempt to break up with their partner several times before the breakup sticks, with the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship being post breakup. On average, a person in an abusive relationship will attempt to leave seven times before finally leaving for good.

“Making the decision to get out of an abusive situation can be difficult and dangerous,” said Blanca Uribe, BWCS Director of External Affairs and Volunteer Relations. “Many times, leaving an abusive relationship is not only emotionally difficult, but it can also be life-threatening. When an abuse victim does get the courage to leave we want them to know we are waiting with open arms to provide shelter, compassion, counseling and assistance to rebuild their life. We are so grateful to have the members of the 340th FTG partner with us in this charge.”

That support was evident when seven 340th FTG members spent half of the day Sept. 11 sorting and packaging clothing at the donation center. Pricilla Mendoza, who's worked at the center for 12 years, said

that volunteer effort saved the center a week of work.

The seed for the women and children's shelter, sowed in 1977 by a social worker and a local minister in a three-bedroom house on San Antonio's North Side, has grown to include a 60,000-square-foot emergency residential facility, a 15,000-square-foot nonresidential facility, the donation center, a court and military liaison program at Bexar County Civil District Courts, a community-based counseling program at Haven for Hope and the first accredited batterer intervention program in San Antonio.

Mari Ayala Sandoval, donation center coordinator, has been affiliated with the shelter since its infancy in that little house in north San Antonio. She was working as a community relations representative for Walmart when she read an article about the original shelter's opening. She learned that clothing that did not sell at the retail outlet was cut up and discarded as damaged goods. Sandoval went to the uncle of Walmart's founder and asked if

the clothing could be donated to the shelter, rather than being destroyed.

In a surreal way, Sandoval's inquiry would change her life in ways she never imagined. Six months later she suffered a stroke, and found herself despondent and just languishing at home, not keen to venture outside.

“The shelter director reached out to me and asked me to, at first, come volunteer and eventually I became the first overflow shelter manager,” said Sandoval. “He (the director) told me just because I had a setback, my life was not over. He said I still had a lot to give. After a while, help was needed at the donation center so off I went. I have now been the donation center coordinator for more than 20 years.”

Sandoval revealed that 340th FTG members would be sorting the complete inventory from a local store that had recently closed.

Generosity like that is typical of the San Antonio community, she said, but the need to restock never ends. The center accepts all new or gently used adult and

children's clothing.

Folks at the shelter try to create as normal an environment as possible for the mothers and children. The main campus has a school for children up to middle school. Students can attend school on campus or be driven to a bus stop for the school where they're already enrolled.

There is also on-site child care to help parents with their younger children. And that enables parents to attend various classes provided by the shelter, as well as the opportunity to seek medical care and counseling, also offered on-site. The shelter also offers 24-hour emergency housing and services, violence intervention programs, substance abuse prevention program for adolescents, and community-based counseling for the homeless.

When families are ready to leave, the shelter helps them find transitional housing, provides them with primary household goods and some small appliances, and an initial supply of food to get them started in their new home.

## COLOR PURPLE

From page 17

feature educational outreach at information tables inside JBSA health care facilities, the JBSA-Lackland Exchange and during the Children's Health Fair Oct. 26 at Brooke Army Medical Center.

Domestic violence is so pervasive that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience some form of it in their lifetime, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

It takes many forms and does not look the same for every family experiencing it, said Chantelle Stoops, JBSA-Lackland FAP outreach manager.

“It can involve physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse,” she said. “There are many behaviors associated with domestic violence, and a main characteristic is power and control. Individuals use tactics such as threats, intimidation, isolation, privilege and/or blaming as means to maintain power and control over their partner/spouse.”

Domestic violence impacts the military mission, said Jessica Reynolds, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston FAP intervention specialist.

“Domestic violence affects the mission because whenever there are things that are going on with the active-duty member's family, it affects the service member,” she said. “For example, if there is a level of domestic violence in the

relationship, depending on the severity this can cause the active-duty member to not be focused and present during their mission.”

Prevention of domestic violence must occur at individual, community and institutional levels, Stoops said.

“A key prevention strategy is educating and modeling healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect, communication, equality and boundaries, just to name a few,” she said.

Prevention can also come through awareness of what domestic violence looks like, Reynolds said.

“Some people think of a woman who looks battered,” she said. “However, domestic violence can come in many different forms such as neglect,

sexual assault, and emotional and psychological abuse. In addition, men can be victims of domestic violence.”

Help is out there for anyone who is experiencing domestic violence, Stoops said.

“We recognize leaving an abusive relationship can be difficult and extremely dangerous,” she said. “It is important that a victim reach out to Family Advocacy and/or agencies in the community such as the Bexar County Family Justice Center to get help whether they decide to terminate or continue the relationship.”

Family Advocacy's domestic abuse victim advocates are available 24/7 through the crisis hotline, 210-367-1213, for safety planning and crisis management, Stoops said.

“Victim advocates can also work with victims to access medical, legal and counseling services,” she said. “We have restricted and unrestricted reporting options for active-duty members and their dependents and partners.”

In addition to FAP representatives and domestic abuse victim advocates, resources at the base level include health care providers, chaplains, Military & Family Life Consultants and Military OneSource, Nance said.

“But if you are in immediate danger, you should call 911 or your local law enforcement agency,” she said.

FAP representatives at JBSA can be reached by calling 210-221-1996, Fort Sam Houston; 210-292-5967, Lackland; or 210-652-6308, Randolph.