

# JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

MAY 15, 2020



SARAYUTH PINHONG / 502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

*Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein (right) and Chief Master Sgt. Manny Pineiro (center), the service's first sergeant special duty manager, talks with an Airman after basic military training graduation at Joint San Antonio-Lackland May 7.*

## Air Force Chief of Staff visits JBSA; commends COVID-19 response

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## 12th AMS keeps planes flying

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## COMMENTARY

# Challenges of parenting during COVID-19

By Airman 1st Class Cory Davis

628TH AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE CHARLESTON, S.C. —As a father of a 4-year-old daughter, the reason I go to work is to make sure that she is taken care of — food in her stomach, clothes on her back, a roof over her head and a better future for her.

I was aware of the possibility that I could be away from my family with little to no contact when I joined the military, and I was prepared to do what I had to do to honor my service commitment.

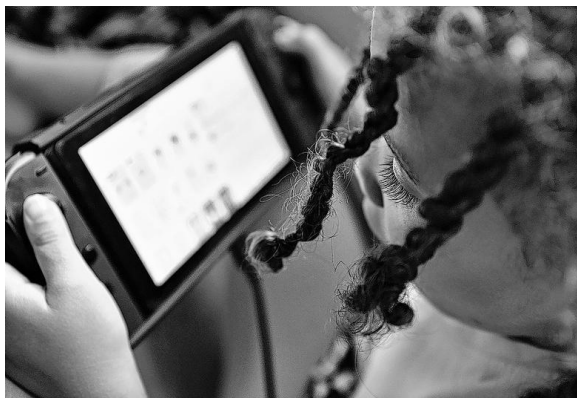
Having said that, all of the training I have received could never have prepared me for, or empowered me to predict, how my work-life balance would be flipped upside down over the past several weeks.

We see the news stories daily, and we all know how COVID-19 has affected people's lives all around the globe. People have been ordered to isolate themselves, keep their distance from one another, and in some cases, people have been placed into quarantine.

As an Airman, I never thought I would be serving in the U.S. Air Force and working from home daily through a global pandemic.

When Joint Base Charleston went into mission-critical status, my public affairs leadership directed us to start operating from home, or teleworking, as much as possible. Social distancing soon became physical distancing and the goal was to limit the opportunity for the spread of disease among each other.

When it comes to public affairs, a lot of people think we just take photos; however, as public affairs specialists we do so much more. We are storytellers. We document history, we tell stories locally and abroad, and we work with people in-



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CORY J. DAVIS

*Akira Arzu-Davis, plays a game on a Nintendo Switch while her father, Airman 1st Class Cory J. Davis, a photojournalist assigned to the 628th Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office, teleworks from home at Joint Base Charleston, S.C.*

ternally and externally daily to showcase our people, assets and missions.

It's an amazing career, it's not always easy, and now this global pandemic has created a semi-chaotic environment for us to navigate and continue our mission as storytellers.

Personally, it has been a very odd time to be alive. Meaning: most non-essential businesses are closed, schools are closed, travel has been restricted and many of us are confused.

This pandemic has affected not only adults, but kids as well. During this time we are urged to physically distance ourselves from others, and some children can't understand what's going on around them.

Keeping my 4-year-old happy and active is a challenge itself, but balancing that and my work has been hectic, to say the least. On a normal day, I would wake up, brew some coffee and get my day started. My daughter may still be asleep, or she may already be awake and running around the house.

There's a lot of juggling we parents have to do in just a few hours, and this pandemic makes proper time management all the more important. For example,

when I think about life before COVID-19 things just seem to go a little smoother. Now, I feel rushed as I have to get her something to eat, check in with my office, work on my assignments, make myself breakfast, feed and take out my dog and a host of other things while my daughter is ready and waiting on me to play and run around.

When there is work to be done and kids that need to be kept occupied it's good to have something for them to do. I've printed so many coloring pages that my printer has run out of ink. We love to play music so she can dance, paint her nails, do her hair and she gets a little time to play games and watch some of her favorite television shows. If I'm lucky, she occasionally takes a nap.

We normally eat dinner after our long day of activities. Some days she will call her mom to see how she is doing and we all just have a good conversation. Toward the end of the night, we get baths and showers out of the way, and we normally settle down with a story right before she goes to sleep. Once she is asleep I finally find those few minutes of peace and quiet that all of us need to ourselves. And

yes, the peace and quiet is oh so sweet.

Why am I telling you all of this? Because my life is now different, and maybe yours is, too. Yes, it appears this pandemic will eventually run its course. During this moment in time, I am a father, an Airman, a day-care worker, a frequent grocery shopper, a manic housekeeper, and at least three-star chef. Let's face it, I think I'm good in the kitchen.

But, after a few weeks of this, I admit I'm exhausted, yet I can't just shut down. After all, I am her father. I am the one who entertains her and in her eyes the singular individual with infinite wisdom and knowledge for my daughter. Yes, it's tiring and so worth it at the same time.

This pandemic has made me realize how much I sincerely appreciate teachers who educate our children, the daycare workers who ensure our kids are taken care of while we all work and the restaurant workers who take care of us when we don't have that extra burst of energy after a long and grueling day to cook those meals we crave.

I really miss y'all.

As a father, I never expected to bring all of my work home with me and be a stay-at-home dad at the same time. On the bright side, I feel like I've been tested to a higher level, and if something like this happens I know that I'll be able to handle it, figure it out and continue to give her a better future. However, I really can't wait for the regular, normal day to return.

Honestly, it's a confusing time at the moment and teleworking from home can have its challenges. However, we are not alone. We may be physically distant but we are able to stay socially connected. Take time for yourself, read a book, binge on a show that you haven't caught up on yet. If you need some mental help seek it out. We are not alone and we will all get through this together.

## JBSA LEGACY

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# Feedback Fridays

By Brig. Gen. Laura L. Lenderman

502D AIR BASE WING 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 using the subject line "Feedback Fridays." Questions will be further researched and published as information becomes available.

## COVID-19

**Q. What is being done to address those federal employees that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified as being of higher risk of a serious case should they contract COVID-19? Are they still working or are they being allowed to self-isolate? Has the 502d Air Base Wing identified those personnel?**

The CDC identifies those conditions as follows: chronic lung disease or moderate or severe asthma, heart disease with complications, immunocompromised, any age with severe obesity (BMI greater than 40), certain underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, renal failure or liver disease, hypertension, pregnancy, age older than 65.

A. Thank you very much for your questions. The safety and wellbeing of all of our JBSA personnel is my top concern.

All members of our valued workforce who have underlying health conditions similar to those outlined by the CDC should speak with their supervisors or leadership to request leave or

adjustments to their teleworking status. These employees may be authorized the use of Weather and Safety Leave, eligibility to telework, modified work schedules or a combination of these accommodations.

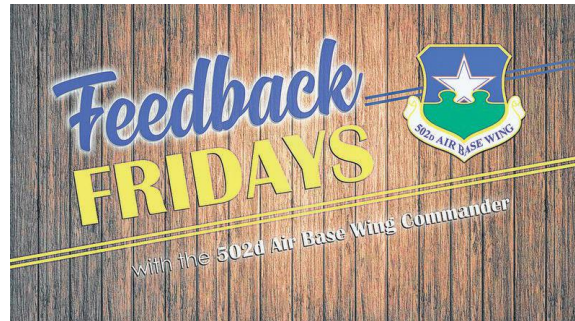
**Q. There is an abundance of taxis on JBSA-Fort Sam Houston on the weekends transporting trainees to and from the PX and other areas. With the need to quarantine and use of sterilized shipping to get Soldiers here, is there any discussion about stopping the flow of public transportation that could spread the virus?**

A. Thank you for your question. We've discussed these concerns with the leadership of JBSA-Fort Sam Houston training organization who have directed trainees to not utilize the taxis and/or wear proper personal protective face coverings.

We are balancing the safety of trainees with the critical requirement for many permanent party and TDY personnel on JBSA-Fort Sam Houston who rely upon them to transit to on and off base locations. Their use has been minimized as much as possible to enforce social distancing and the "Stay Home-Stay Safe" order.

**Q. I went to the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Pershing ballfield this morning to do a virtual 5K for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and encountered a unit doing a PT test. They were not following social distancing and only partially following face covering guidance — person holding feet had cloth mask but person doing sit-ups did not.**

I am part of a team that has been setting up an overflow intensive care unit for Brooke Army Medical Center to try to avoid situations like New York and Italy.



COURTESY GRAPHIC /

The distancing measures and extension of PT test requirements are meant to help reduce infection rates. When I asked why they were conducting the test, they said they were aware of the regulations but had been directed to do it by their commander.

I'm asking JBSA to come together as a team and help us limit this virus. The PT tests are a high risk activity that are not currently required.

A. Thank you very much for bringing this to my attention. We are very grateful for you and your team and the selfless service you provide every day to keep us healthy and safe.

I've asked my team to engage with our mission partners to ensure unit leadership and commanders ensure the safety of their personnel.

Our military personnel are expected to remain mission ready to include meeting physical fitness standards; however, this can and should be done in compliance all CDC recommended COVID-19 social distancing, personal hygiene and sanitation precautions.

Thank you taking a stand to help educate and remind all of the need to follow all precautions.

## Installation & Facilities

**Q. Please do something about exhaust from government and private vehicles entering buildings where people are working. This also includes commercial government vehicles and many**

**types of large work trucks.**

Please also do something about Goodwill landscaping that uses multiple types of mowing, leaf blowers with extreme capacity to move debris, riding equipment that has poisonous exhaust spreads huge clouds of dust and particles of debris in the areas where people live and work while they are present.

People are ignoring no parking signs. Facility managers will not police parking areas. Supervisors of work sites ignore and disregard common sense work safety to residents and occupants in buildings.

It is common sense to protect health, these accepted unsafe practices are causing injuries and disease. It will take a major initiative from the 502d ABW Commander to change these unsafe practices.

A. Thank you for highlighting the importance of emission mitigation which is a critical initiative for JBSA and our surrounding community. We are working together with the City of San Antonio and Bexar County to improve the air quality and mitigate and reduce environmental hazards.

Regarding your specific questions, most large vehicles should not be operating in close proximity to facilities unless directly related to a mission set for that facility (supply, vehicle maintenance, etc.) or to support a specific purpose (maintenance, construction, deliveries).

In most instances, these vehicles should not be running

while not in use, unless necessitated by the supported function. Additionally, most facilities on JBSA should be operating with their windows and doors closed to ensure the efficiency of HVAC systems. If these systems are not functioning properly or if a vehicle parked nearby the facility is creating excessive exhaust that is entering the facility, occupants should work with their facility managers or unit leadership to help resolve, to include engagement with the unit that oversees the vehicle and/or coordination with the Wing Safety office.

Facility managers should coordinate with Civil Engineering on any construction/maintenance related activities, which are required to follow prescribed to abide by work-site safety management practices.

Regarding our landscaping contractor, their guidelines require them to maximize safety precautions when operating landscaping machinery on JBSA. By nature of their operations, moving dust and debris will occur; however, the employees are instructed to take precautions to help avoid injury or damage to persons or property. If a specific incident occurs, please contact your facility manager who will reach out to CE Customer Service to resolve.

To the policing of parking lots and "No Parking" spaces and areas, our Defenders take appropriate action immediately upon spotting violations.

However, with current manpower and our priorities aligned to COVID-19 support operations, we are not patrolling parking lots as much as before the month of March.

Therefore, if you see a pattern of violations going unchecked, please elevate up your chain of command to your commander, who has an opportunity to bring it up in the monthly installation Executive Agent-hosted "Mission Partner Forum." Appropriate action will be taken from there. Thank you again for bringing these concerns to my attention.

FEEDBACK continues on 4

# Army creates additional support requirement when couples split

By Jim Tripp

LEGAL ASSISTANCE ATTORNEY,  
SOLDIER LEGAL SERVICES

The topic of separation or divorce isn't an easy one, but it is important to be educated on the Army's financial support requirements when a couple considers going down that path.

The bottom line is that the Army requires Soldiers to provide financial support to family members.

The specifics are usually left up to the Soldier and his or her spouse, but if there is a dispute between the parties regarding financial support, commanders follow the guidance in Army Regulation 608-99, which been in place for many years.

The Army recently supplemented AR 608-99 with Army Directive 2020-04, which creates an additional financial support requirement.

Before we explain the new financial support requirement,

some background on AR 608-99 is needed. The regulation starts by requiring that Soldiers comply with any court-ordered financial support requirements. If there is no court-ordered financial support, then commanders look to see if the parties have an agreement.

If there is no court order or agreement, then AR 608-99 requires the Soldier to pay his or her spouse and other family members an amount each month that takes into consideration a number of factors, such as the rank of the Soldier, whether the spouse is also in the military, where the spouse and family members are living, and whether the spouse makes more money than the Soldier.

A common scenario involves a Soldier moving into the barracks, while the spouse and children live in an apartment off post.

In that situation, the Soldier normally pays the spouse an

amount of money equal to the non-locality Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) at the With Dependents rate, which may be found at [https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/browse/Allowances/Non-Locality\\_BAH/2020-Non-Locality-BAH-Rates.pdf](https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/browse/Allowances/Non-Locality_BAH/2020-Non-Locality-BAH-Rates.pdf).

The Soldier can either pay the amount owed directly to the other spouse, or he or she can pay the rent and utilities of the other spouse and family members. The payments are meant to be temporary, bridging the gap between when a couple separates and when a court issues financial support requirements as part of a divorce.

In Army Directive 2020-04, the Secretary of the Army has approved an enhanced interim financial support requirement, which becomes effective May 24.

Per the directive, in addition to the regular amount owed under AR 608-99, Soldiers will pay an additional amount to

their spouse. The additional amount will be the BAH-Diff rate for the Soldier's pay grade. The BAH-Diff rate is also available at [https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/browse/Allowances/Non-Locality\\_BAH/2020-Non-Locality-BAH-Rates.pdf](https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/browse/Allowances/Non-Locality_BAH/2020-Non-Locality-BAH-Rates.pdf).

The enhanced payments are to ensure the spouse and family members have quick access to funds for food and other necessities – not simply housing – until they are able to start the separation process in a U.S. state court with jurisdiction to order support.

How long the enhanced payments continue depends on where the spouse lives. For families where a U.S. state court has jurisdiction to order financial support, the Soldier will make a one-time enhanced payment in conjunction with the first 30 days of support regularly required by AR 608-99.

For all other families – mean-

ing those without access to a U.S. state court – the Soldier will make the enhanced payments for as long as the regular support is required by AR 608-99 (i.e., until there is a written agreement or a court order for financial support).

Soldiers satisfy the enhanced payment obligation by making a payment directly to their spouse. Payments may be made in cash, by check or money order, or in other ways that allow the spouse and family members to have prompt access to funds for food and other necessities.

Soldiers and spouses with questions on the new enhanced support obligations may contact a legal assistance attorney for advice and assistance.

For more information, call Soldier Legal Services at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, located at 2422 Stanley Road, building 134, at 210-808-0169.

## FEEDBACK

From page 3

### Miscellaneous

**Q. A few weeks ago, the City of San Antonio, or CoSA, opened a new walking trail that goes from Eisenhower Park across Military Highway to right in front of the Main JBSA-Camp Bullis gate.**

**With COVID-19, the park is regularly overcrowded with many cars parked along Military Highway, making it difficult to access JBSA-Camp Bullis to get to work. Many of the trail users do not pay attention to the busy road they are crossing.**

**Can we install or request signs from CoSA for both the pedestrian and vehicle traffic and/or have no parking signs posted outside the gate? If nothing is done, there is a very high likelihood that an accident will**

**result in injury or death.**

**A. Thank you for your feedback and concerns! We reached out to TXDoT and identified our safety concerns along with requesting pedestrian crossing signs for vehicles and caution signs to warn pedestrians of oncoming traffic.**

**In addition to these items, we also asked them to look into installing "No Parking" signs posted outside the gate and possibly an overflow parking area away from Military Highway. As always, protecting the health and safety of personnel is my number one priority.**

**Q. Why after 5 years, and in a pre-COVID environment, is the military community not advertising, utilizing and promoting the Gateway Club for off-duty Soldiers, singles, retirees and those on TDY as a great place to relax and socialize with quality entertainment, bands, Karaoke, etc. on Friday nights?**

**A. Thank you very much for supporting our JBSA clubs and**

**helping us advertise our entertainment initiatives!**

**When health conditions allow, the Gateway Club will resume hosting a variety night every Friday in the Lone Star Lounge with a DJ playing a variety of music, and will continue to implement new programs into the calendar.**

**Please check out the JBSA Today website and magazine, 502d FSS Facebook, marquees and subscribe to FSS weekly emails to stay informed of all the happenings at the Gateway, Parr, and Kendrick Clubs as well as the Fort Sam Houston Community Center. I hope to see you soon at the Club!**

**Q. Please assist with getting the word out on enforcing the Air Force smoking directive. There is a systemic problem across JBSA facilities not having designated smoking areas (per AFI) and no enforcement restricting those that smoke/use tobacco products to these areas.**

**On a daily basis, myself**

**and others have to walk past/through second hand smoke at my workplace and other locations where people are smoking on the paths of travel to our facilities. Per Air Force Initiative 48-104, Aerospace Medicine, Tobacco Free Living, there shouldn't be anyone smoking (includes vaping and other tobacco products) within 50 feet of building entrances.**

**We don't have any signage, or letter that we know of where the commander/director has designated a smoking area and zero enforcement. This is more of an issue when it's raining as those smoking are positioned under the overhangs of the buildings. There are no Designated Tobacco Area letter/signs indicating where they may smoke.**

**A. Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention. My team will work hard to ensure designated smoking areas are enforced. There are locations**

**that were previously approved as Designated Tobacco Areas, or DTA, which are maintained in our Civil Engineers' mapping system database; however, these locations are no longer valid based on revised medical AFI guidance that was published last year.**

**Our CE team worked on replottting those locations based on the new criteria and has the drafts developed. After review, our Community Planning Office will identify which areas should become, or in the case of acceptable existing sites remain as, DTAs.**

**Once finalized, the revised map will be coordinated with the Air Base Wing and the medical community for approval. At that time, the map will be available on our Geobase SharePoint website to facility managers. Following that, CE will fix the signage on facilities that were or are now DTAs so that everyone can be informed of the new designations. So be on the lookout!**

# Air Force Assistance Fund campaign still underway

By Latoya Crowe

AIR FORCE AID SOCIETY

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Georgia** — Many Airmen have been impacted by the current health crisis. Spouses have lost jobs, unbudgeted expenses have increased, and the stop-movement order for Airmen PCSing has meant that many are unable to follow their loved ones to new homes.

While younger Airmen struggle with child care solutions, widows of retirees have added expenses to protect themselves from the coronavirus while continuing to receive regular care.

If you or a fellow Airman is in one of these situations, you can rely on the four affiliate



charities of the Air Force. Visit [www.afassistancefund.org](http://www.afassistancefund.org) for contact information and to see how they can help.

The AF Assistance Fund Campaign began a few weeks ago, and since then, our Air Force Charities have responded to the effects this virus is having on our Air Force family in an all-out attempt to support their fellow Airmen and their families in any way possible.

The Gen & Mrs. Curtis E.

LeMay Foundation has provided a “One Time Relief Grant” to each of their widows. The Chief Operating Officer said that they realize our retirees will need additional funds to offset the costs of home deliveries of groceries and medical prescription needs.

Air Force Enlisted Village provides senior living services for Air Force surviving spouses. AFEV is doing everything possible to protect its residents from the coronavirus including increasing staff to ensure residents’ safety.

The Air Force Villages Charitable Foundation (AFVCF) is home to widowed spouses who can no longer support themselves, through no fault of their own. AFVCF is also providing extra protection for this

vulnerable population through their entire continuum of health care.

The Air Force Aid Society is well-known to many Airmen for their emergency assistance, educational support and community programs to Air Force families, and as usual, AFAS has stepped in to assist many Air Force families who are facing financial challenges because of COVID-19 causing spouse unemployment and stop-movement orders.

With only a few weeks left in the email-only campaign, we still have quite a long way to go to meet our goal. After 8 weeks of the 2019 AFAF Campaign, Airmen raised over \$2.8 million. This year as we close our eighth week, the AFAF campaign now sits at \$601,500,

less than one-fourth of where we were last year.

With this crisis, Airmen’s needs have increased. If you are able, please help your fellow Airmen by supporting the only official campaign authorized Air Force-wide that is For Airmen, By Airmen! Let’s continue our Air Force legacy of taking care of our own.

Go to <https://www.afassistancefund.org/index.php/donate> to use the new e-Giving platform to give via credit card, debit card, or e-Check.

Thank you, in advance, for supporting the charities that support us. Again, the AFAF Campaign is For Airmen, By Airmen, and giving today means helping a fellow Airman 3— or possibly yourself — tomorrow! #PayItForward

## DOD aims to make moves easier with household goods contract

By C. Todd Lopez

DOD NEWS

**WASHINGTON** — A new contract to facilitate the movement of household goods, an integral part of any move to a new duty location, is expected to make things easier for both service members and their families.

The U.S. Transportation Command awarded the contract to American Roll-On Roll-Off Carrier Group Inc. on April 30. The first move under the new contract won’t take place until February, Transcom’s director of acquisition said at a news conference today.

“The ... contract is an important component of improving service members’ experiences during the relocation process and fundamentally restructures DOD’s relationship with the household goods industry in order to improve access to, and management of, quality capacity to meet peak demand and enable the department to fix the accountability and responsibility lacking in today’s program,” said Ken Brennan.

The New Jersey-based business was chosen for the contract because the proposal the company submitted provided the best service for the best value for service members, Defense Department

civilians and their families, Brennan said, adding that the carrier group beat out six other competing proposals.

Rick Marsh, the director of the defense personal property program at Transcom, said the new contract will bring great benefit to service members and their families.

Right now, he said, there’s no single contractor the DOD uses to move household goods. As a result, he said, no portion of the industry is motivated to spend money to enhance the service they provide.

“There is ... no rationale to invest in quality suppliers and invest in your network,” Marsh said. “You can’t forecast the work that you’re going to perform. Our current model leads to using day laborers and other folks that maybe aren’t as well-trained as moving professionals should be.”

By centralizing the work in one company, he said, DOD lets industry know what the demand is for household goods movement, and that allows for investment. “They can hire and invest in very highly trained employees to come into service member homes to handle packout or delivery,” he said.

As far as accountability is concerned, he said, the department has more than

300 personal property offices at installations and another 42 shipping offices around the world that will have formally appointed contracting officers and quality assurance evaluators.

“We’re going to be working off of a centralized quality assurance surveillance plan to ensure we have accurate, rigorous oversight over the contract,” Marsh said.

For families who have issues with their move, he said, there will be new avenues to rectify problems.

“I would say most of the issues that we have in our current program revolve around communication,” he said. “We’re going to be able to bring tools to the table that we simply can’t deliver today under the current program, to be able to put families in touch with representatives from industry faster — to make the claims process much cleaner, much simpler, and for them to be, to have it settled and to be made whole ... much faster than they are today.”

Currently, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many service members are unable to relocate as they might have expected during the summer months, while others will be allowed to move if granted an exception, Marsh said. For those who are allowed to move under

such an exception, efforts will be made to protect both families and movers from COVID-19.

“In an effort to protect the force and deliver a safe moving experience to DOD families, DOD has directed a series of health protection measures for personnel moving during the stop-movement period,” he said.

DOD has directed that industry personnel adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s health protection protocols, Marsh said. That includes wearing face coverings, minimizing crew sizes, cleaning frequently touched surfaces and practicing good hand hygiene.

Additionally, Marsh said, moving crews will need to verify the health of their teams upon arriving at military families’ homes.

“When a moving crew arrives at the curb for a pack out or delivery, moving companies will present written verification that members of the crew have been screened for illness and will be properly equipped to adhere to these protocols,” Marsh said.

If a family does have concerns about the health of the team that arrives to move their household goods, Marsh said, they are also empowered to ask those movers to not come into their home.



# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## USAISR on frontlines of COVID-19 fight

Institute involved in treatment as well as research to help patients fighting virus

By Dr. Steven Galvan

U.S. ARMY INSTITUTE OF SURGICAL RESEARCH  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted lives in more than 185 countries throughout the world, changing how people work, shop, play and interact with each other every day.

With all the ongoing changes, the staff at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, or USAISR, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston has also made modifications in how it conducts day-to-day business while maintaining its overall research mission of “optimizing combat casualty care” and, further, providing the best quality care to patients at the only U.S. Department of Defense Burn Center.

One of these changes includes the decision to suspend current and planned research in order to comply with Force Health Protection social distancing requirements, as well as an imperative to conserve personal protective equipment for clinical use.

To contribute directly to the fight against COVID-19, the USAISR converted research space into an intensive care unit, thus providing potential surge capacity to Brooke Army Medical Center for treating patients infected with COVID-19.

“The research facilities were built with a mass casualty conversion capability,” said Air Force Col. (Dr.) Erik Weitzel, USAISR deputy commander. “In times of need, a majority of the two research building basements can be converted to support Brooke Army Medical Center overflow.”

The USAISR and BAMC are collocated, allowing the joint facility to care for infected patients in San Antonio and the surrounding area. The additional ICU overflow at the USAISR, dubbed the “Victory” ICU, will be staffed by a combination of USAISR and BAMC person-



*Capt. Farley Raquel and Sgt. Rebecca Hummer do a system check on ventilators in the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research “Victory” Intensive Care Unit at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.*

nel and will be used if the only Level I trauma center within the DOD receives a massive influx of COVID-19 patients.

“The Research Directorate is supporting the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic on two fronts,” said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Thomas Edwards, USAISR Deputy Director of Research. “The first front is supporting BAMC with an additional 80 to 130 additional beds to treat severe virus infections. The second is to incorporate novel research projects designed to help patients fighting COVID-19 infections.”

Col. (Dr.) Andrew Cap, USAISR Director of Research, partnered with colleagues at the USAISR headquarters, the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command at Fort Detrick, Maryland, and the Armed Services Blood Program, to build a DOD-wide investigational treatment program using

blood plasma from patients recovering from COVID-19. This blood product, called convalescent plasma, contains antibodies to the coronavirus which may help patients transfused with it to more rapidly clear their infections.

“One might think that treating COVID-19 is not relevant to the mission of the combat casualty care research,” Weitzel added. “These creative researchers have found numerous ways they can contribute. Research studies on blood products used to treat combat wounded have suggested a way in which those who have already recovered from the infections are able to provide the fastest and perhaps most effective way to treat this deadly virus. The USAISR researchers are leading the way with this ‘convalescent plasma’ concept.”

Sgt. 1st Class Anniel Samujh, Research Directorate Non-commissioned-

officer-in-charge believes COVID-19 has not negatively affected the research mission. In fact, he believes the virus has made research stronger with respect to the fight against COVID-19 while still supporting combat casualty care.

“What we are currently doing has never been done here before,” Samujh said. “We continue to push the limits as one cohesive team to answer our Nation’s call.”

At the USAISR Burn Center, the staff continues to care for burn and trauma patients. According to Burn Center Director, Dr. Leopoldo “Lee” Cancio, the facility is poised to admit trauma patients who would otherwise be treated at BAMC so their staff can concentrate on treating COVID-19 infected patients. This provision should keep the virus from spreading to burn and trauma patients.

“The Burn Center has been designated as a ‘clean unit,’” said Col. Jodelle “Jodi” Schroeder, Deputy Commander for Nursing. “That means we are taking every precaution to protect our vulnerable burn patient population from being collocated with COVID-19 patients.”

Throughout the entire Institute, non-essential personnel are also doing their part by working from home and following recommended guidelines to minimize the spread of the virus.

“We have also taken an aggressive stance on tracking and having staff self-quarantine until they are ruled out of being COVID-19 positive to ensure we do not spread the disease to our staff and patients,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jensen Gomez, Burn Center noncommissioned-officer-in-charge.

Overall, Buller said he was extremely proud of every member of the USAISR Team.

“Everyone is doing an extremely noble job,” he said. “From everyone at the Burn Center to each member of the research and supporting staff at the research facilities, they are all putting a tremendous effort to support our determination to beat this deadly virus.”

## MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

# My little GSXR and me

1ST ARMORED DIVISION  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FORT BLISS — I had just gotten off work and my buddy and I were leaving post. There was just a little more than 1,000 miles on my new bike, a Suzuki GSXR, and I was loving it. I'd been riding for more than eight years but had been without a bike for about a year. Man, I missed riding.

My buddy went straight on Sergeant Major Boulevard and I hung a left onto Airport Road. I gently rolled on the throttle around the long, sweeping corner.

As the turn progressed and my ability to see it completely opened up, I spotted sand and gravel that had washed onto the road. My eyes fixated on the hazard as my mind worked to swerve around it. My body tightened and I had a death grip on the bars as I wrenched the bike around. The rear wheel bobbled. I managed to get the bike upright, but then hit the outside curb and was thrown onto the asphalt.

I slid and rolled on the ground. My buddy, who had happened to look back, raced toward me, convinced I'd been killed. As I laid in the dirt, I was surprised I survived. It was hours later before I realized just how much I hurt. At that moment, however, the road rash on my arms was the only injury that registered.

Since then, I have spent some time thinking about what I might have done differently that day.

In the real world, people cross the street in front of you, trucks spill their loads, animals dart



STOCK.ADOBE.COM

*May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month and this Soldier-rider's story is being retold to give insights into the many hazards riders face when they are on the road.*

across the road and traffic jams stop the flow of vehicles unexpectedly. Also, there is no one sweeping the sand and gravel off the road every day. So what caused my accident?

**Complacency:** I took that same corner every day for the past two months. I loved it. It was perfectly banked and almost always had no traffic. It begged to be ridden through. But that day was different. I was expecting the turn to be the same even though I could not see the entire road surface all the way around the corner. Luckily, I survived to learn to treat every corner in the real world as though it is the first time I have encountered it. From now on, I will go to the race track for predictable corners I can blindly accelerate through.

**Surface changes:** Once I spotted the gravel, it took me a moment to comprehend it was a danger. When I was a new rider, I always assumed any change in the road surface could signify a change in traction and pose a threat. Back then, I did not need time to comprehend what the change in surface appearance represented because I treated every change with respect. That

split-second advantage may have allowed me to manage the crisis with much more skill rather than just reacting badly. **Skill or reaction?** I used to do track days on my old bike. With good coaching, I developed some great bike skills that translated well to the real world. But after taking a year off from motorcycling and then getting on a new, unfamiliar bike, those skills were not the first thing to rise to the surface in a crisis. I got target fixated on the gravel, stiff on the bike and put a death grip on the bars. Everything I did was driven by instinct. Everything I did was wrong.

On the race track, I learned to stay loose, look where I wanted to go and how to let the bike slide in a turn without crashing. Of course, these things take practice, but I don't have access to a race track. However, Fort Bliss offers the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Military SportBike Rider Course that would have helped polish my rusty skills and given me ways to practice them without access to a race track. I will ask my supervisor to schedule me for the next course.

# BAMC workers deliver some birthday cheer

By Elaine Sanchez  
BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL  
CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A self-proclaimed extrovert, Mary McBride was feeling a bit discouraged by the long weeks of self-isolation due to COVID-19, especially on her 45th birthday recently.

While she'd planned a festive celebration of life to mark her cancer-free year, due to the pandemic, McBride downgraded her plans to a socially distanced virtual call with a few friends.

McBride's care team at Brooke Army Medical Center, however, had a few plans of their own. They organized a surprise drive-by birthday parade that caught this cancer survivor completely off guard.

"I wanted to bring a little joy to Mary on her birthday," said Bianca Rodriguez, BAMC breast nurse navigator. "When you are a cancer survivor, celebrating life events, such as a birthday, is huge. It's another year, but it's something many of us take for granted."

On April 25, McBride was in her room relaxing when she heard dozens of cars honking outside. "My mom called me out of my room and I rushed outside," she said. "That's when I saw all of the cars."

With a hot pink hat perched on her head, McBride and her mom, Debbie, watched as a parade of more than 30 cars circled their cul-de-sac as drivers called out birthday wishes and waved balloons, signs and streamers. From next door, McBride's neighbor shouted over, "You have a



Mary McBride (left), and her mother, Debbie, are surprised by a drive-by parade organized by her Brooke Army Medical Center cancer care team in honor of McBride's birthday and cancer-free year.

**"My heart just swelled with even more love for BAMC."**

— Mary McBride, cancer survivor

lot of friends!"

"I saw people from the clinic and across the hospital; people that didn't even know me. The cars kept on going," she said. "My mom and I were both in tears."

The size of the parade even took the organizer by surprise. Rodriguez had thought of the idea just a few days earlier, simply hoping to brighten up McBride's day during a challenging time for her patients by inviting a few colleagues to safely pass on birthday wishes.

"The isolation has been difficult for my patients," said Rodriguez, who aids breast cancer patients

and their caregivers through their treatment and recovery journey. "I get emails every day with questions and concerns, and I do my best to help."

While the parade started out small, thanks to her broad network and the help of a few friends, word quickly spread across the hospital and the turnout was beyond Rodriguez's expectations. "So many healthcare professionals gave the gift of time over the weekend," she said. "For these extremely busy providers and leaders, there's no greater gift they could have given at this challenging time."

more minor procedure. Born with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, McBride also suffered a stroke that left her wheelchair-bound and unable to tolerate radiation treatment for her cancer.

McBride's mastectomy was successful. It wasn't until a routine mammogram in 2018 that she received the news she had been dreading. "I found out that I now had cancer in my other breast," she said. "Still, I felt fortunate that it was again caught early."

McBride underwent a lumpectomy and has been cancer-free since 2018.

"When Mary had her second cancer scare, I recall thinking, 'Why Mary?' " Rodriguez said. "She's such a beautiful, positive human being and has been through so much. But cancer is never fair and it doesn't discriminate."

McBride attributes her positive outlook to her faith and to her care team. "Every clinic and

provider has gone above and beyond for me," she said. "The care is exceptional."

Her mom, Debbie, also noted her gratitude for the "top-notch" care they've received at BAMC. "We were guided every step of the way by Bianca," she said. And shoutouts to every person who worked with Mary in every clinic!

Rodriguez agrees. "Part of the reason I do what I do is because of the providers I work with," she said. "They are the most amazing, passionate people you will ever meet. The fact that they took time out from their weekend to support Mary ... I feel immense gratitude."

McBride hopes to gather with her family and friends in person next year, but she'll never forget her 45th birthday, she said.

"It meant the world to me," she said. "My heart just swelled with even more love for BAMC."

It was a well-deserved gift, Rodriguez noted, especially in light of this two-time breast cancer survivor's journey over the past few years.

McBride was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017 after a routine mammogram. As she sat in the waiting area, she knew something was wrong.

"The staff was acting differently," she said. "But because of my faith and prayer, as I silently rolled back to the ultrasound room, I said to God, 'How do you want me to handle this?' and I very audibly heard God say to me, 'Handle it like you've always handled it and be my witness through it.'"

While caught in the early stages, her providers recommended she have a mastectomy due to health issues preventing a



# Soldier-athletes help force, families stay fit

By Brittany Nelson

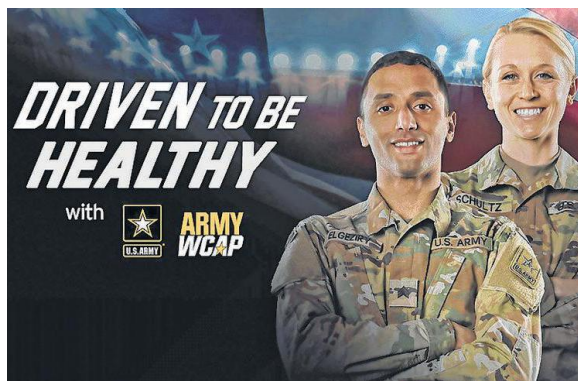
U.S. ARMY INSTALLATION  
MANAGEMENT COMMAND PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS

U.S. Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation have teamed up with the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program to help the force and their families stay fit through social media during isolation due to COVID-19.

WCAP is made up of elite Soldier-athletes who compete in international competitions. They are currently working on qualifying or training for the 2021 Olympics.

COVID-19 has changed their normal training routines but they are using this time to help keep the force and their families in shape by sharing their home workouts and healthy eating tips.

"This is a way for WCAP to give back to the Army and make its mark," said Capt. Bryce Livingston, WCAP commander. "We can show what the program is capable of. We want to bring the Army along with us to adopt a healthy lifestyle."



NELSON, BRITTANY J MS. NAF USA IMCOM HQ

**"This is a way for WCAP to give back to the Army and make its mark. We can show what the program is capable of. We want to bring the Army along with us to adopt a healthy lifestyle."**

Capt. Bryce Livingston, WCAP commander

FamilyMWR and WCAP are posting home workouts on Facebook and Instagram ranging from live yoga sessions to

cardio exercises featuring the Soldier-athletes as instructors. Healthy cooking videos are also posted every Wednesday.

"Diet is such a big portion of exercise and weight loss and gain," said Maj. Kelly Kaim, WCAP performance dietician. "If you put the wrong kind of fuel in your body you won't perform well."

The workouts and healthy eating tips are reaching Soldiers and their families around the world. Kaim mentions it is important for spouses and families to have an understanding of what a healthy lifestyle involves.

"A lot of the times the spouses are cooking for the Soldiers and children," Kaim said. "Kids model what you do, and if you aren't eating healthy they will not see it as important."

Some families have more time on their hands during the pandemic. Spc. Samantha Schultz, 2021 Olympic qualifier in modern pentathlon, says they can use this time to get active.

"Fitness can be a fun way to get their family together," Schultz said. "You can get your kids active. Do an indoor gym class or a healthy cooking lesson. There is so much you can build into a healthy lifestyle."

Schultz also urges Soldiers to

stay fit during this time so they can maintain their readiness.

"Even though life is at a standstill, we still need to be ready and take care of ourselves," Schultz said. "We are at home and should take advantage of it and see how we can improve our fitness."

Another Soldier-athlete participating in workout videos is track runner Spc. Haron Lagat. Lagat supports healthy lifestyles for all Soldiers and their Families.

"A healthy lifestyle is the best kind of life insurance you can buy, and we can help the force achieve that through these videos," Lagat said.

Although the Soldier-athletes' training has changed, they continue to stay fit and look forward to training for the 2021 Olympics.

"These soldiers were ready for 2020, they will be ready for 2021," Livingston said. "WCAP was very well prepared, and this is making us even stronger."

To find workout videos and healthy recipes, visit @FamilyMWR or @USArmyWCAP on Facebook or Instagram.

## NMFSC honors Navy Medicine Civilian Corps' 3rd birthday in teleconference

By Petty Officer 1st Class  
David Kolmel

NAVAL MEDICAL FORCES SUPPORT  
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Naval Medical Forces Support Command, or NMFSC, chief of staff honored the Navy Medicine Civilian Corps' third birthday in a teleconference message April 30.

Dr. Rick Dickinson read a letter sent out by Dr. Andrew Jones, director of the Navy Medicine Civilian Corps, to the Navy Medicine civilians during a teleconference at Joint Base

San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston to thank them for their service.

"With more than 11,500 civilian personnel serving in all aspects of Navy Medicine, I want you to know that your excellence has never been more apparent than it is during this particularly trying and demanding year," Jones said. "I extend to every member of the Civilian Corps team my personal thank for your positive impact in accomplishing the Navy Medicine mission. Thank you again for your tireless and selfless service. Happy 3rd

anniversary!"

Due to COVID-19, instead of hosting a cake cutting ceremony, Dickinson hosted a teleconference call with NMFSC civilians to introduce himself as the new chief of staff, discuss his vision for the command, and to thank them for their continued hard work.

"I have been with you now for almost three weeks," Dickinson said. "The professionalism that you all have, the ability to take on whatever mission is set before you, and accomplish it — particularly during this

time of the unknown — makes me very honored and humbled to be your chief of staff."

"I just want to echo Dr. Jones' comments and tell you how much of an honor it is to serve with you," Dickinson added.

Dickinson was recently hired as the new NMFSC chief of staff and served in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corp for 27 years, retiring in 2015 as a colonel. He holds a doctorate in human resources and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.



MCI DAVID KOLMEL

Dr. Rick Dickinson honored the Navy Medicine Civilian Corps' third birthday in a teleconference message.

# LACKLAND

## Chief of Staff Gen. Goldfein takes a close look at training in COVID time

By 1st Lt. Allison Kirk  
37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein, along with Chief Master Sgt. Manny Pineiro, the service's first sergeant special duty manager, visited Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland May 7, seeing firsthand how basic military training has adapted operations to fight through the COVID-19 environment.

Basic military training, in addition to technical and flying training, has been deemed mission essential and vital to readiness.

"The nation relies on us to provide global vision, reach and power, which doesn't happen without the critical foundation built here at basic military training," Goldfein said. "BMT's response in the COVID-19 fight has been swift and unwavering in developing the enlisted air and space professionals we need to fly, fight and win in all domains."

The traveling party maintained a small footprint and adhered to all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Defense Department social-distancing guidelines to ensure protection of their health and those around them.

During the visit, Goldfein and Pineiro met with Air Education and Training Command's front-line BMT personnel, including the Military Entrance Processing Station team, support staff, military training instructors, charge of quarters team and newest graduates.



SARAYUTH PINTHONG / 502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

*Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein visits the Legacy Dormitory May 7, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. Goldfein met with AETC leaders to see firsthand how Basic Military Training is fighting through COVID-19 with health protection measures in place and adapting operations to current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance.*

"Developing lethal, ready Airmen is a year-round business for our MTIs and all of the BMT training support organizations," Goldfein said. "I'm motivated by their dedication, but their flexibility during COVID-19 is a reminder that the mission doesn't stop."

The service's senior leaders personally addressed the newest Airmen during their BMT graduation ceremony. The 630 graduates were the first Airmen placed in a 14-day restriction of movement status at the start of training, one of many

measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19.

"This is the first class to face all of the new procedures and measures since the COVID-19 crisis began, and you made it," Goldfein said. "To the families back home, thank you for sharing your greatest treasure with us."

After graduation, Goldfein spoke directly to the Airmen who recovered from COVID-19 during BMT and completed training.

"You arrived here in the face of unprecedented times and I'm

proud to be your wingman," Goldfein said. "You are leaving here with the foundation and now we look to you to keep learning, keep adapting, and keep finding creative solutions for tomorrow's battlespace."

With force health protection as a top priority, while balancing mission readiness, charting the path forward for BMT during the response to COVID-19 has been a joint effort between members of the 37th Training Wing, 502nd Air Base Wing and the 59th Medical Wing.

"We have been able to continue fueling our force thanks to the effective collaboration of this tri-wing approach," Goldfein said. "Partnerships such as these are how we, as a Force, will shape our new abnormal. Despite COVID-19, what the BMT team and the supporting wings have established here is the gold standard for training."

Senior leaders also visited the Reid Clinic, observing how 59th MDW members have adjusted medical support operations for BMT.

"Our overall mission to provide routine and preventive health care to our most important asset, our Airmen, has not changed," said Maj. Gen. John J. DeGoes, 59th MDW commander. "We continue to provide high reliability healthcare in order to aid in supplying combatant commanders with healthy, expertly trained warfighters."

The senior leaders also observed how the 37th TRW and 502nd ABW implemented BMT COVID-19 restriction of movement on arrival, as well as quarantine, person-under-investigation and isolation operations.

Throughout the visit, Goldfein emphasized the Air Force way ahead: living and operating with a cyclical virus in our midst.

"Many of your cadre and leadership teams were in their early years when the attacks of 9/11 shaped the nation," Goldfein said. "This is now your time and responsibility to shape and contribute to our nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic."



# Cyberwarrior turns hobby into enterprise that helps save lives

Using 3-D printing, he makes repurposed clear binders into medical face shields

By Trevor Tiernan

67TH CYBERSPACE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

During times of crisis, the Air Force family rallies to support one another. For some, that family extends beyond those in the blue uniform.

As the COVID-19 pandemic caused personal protective equipment shortages across the health care industry, Staff Sgt. Austin Cooperrider, from the 836th Cyberspace Operations Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, did what seems like a simple thing ... he pressed "PRINT."

"My initial inclination is I want to help where I can," he said. "I know I don't have any medical skills to help the front lines of the pandemic, but we all have something to contribute. I just found my niche in 3D printing."

Cooperrider's help came in the form of 3D printing face shields for healthcare workers through Masks for Docs. The organization is a grassroots effort that brings volunteers around the world together to get much needed protective equipment to medical professionals. A big part of the volunteer effort comes from the 3D printing community, both hobbyists and commercial businesses.

"The 3D printing community across the world has taken the banner in supporting hospital needs," Cooperrider said. "Major 3D printing companies and universities have taken their

printer farms, along with 24-hour teams and donated printers, to produce as many as 1,000 face shields a day."

The face shields the volunteers are making are very simple in design, yet effective in protecting those working around sick patients every day. Made up of just three plastic pieces, a headband, a clear plastic face shield, and a support band, the masks can also be sanitized multiple times for extended service.

"The shields are made of sheet plastic or repurposed clear binder covers," Cooperrider said. "So anyone with a printer can make the headbands. The plastic sheet just needs to be sized and holes punched so that it fits onto the headband."

Cooperrider first heard about the program early on via social media.

"Multiple social networking sites I visit had posts about printing masks and shields for US and European hospitals," he said. "A few times, I saw the Masks for Docs organization referenced. Then a previous co-worker made a call out to people he knew with printers to help fill the need in San Antonio. That was when I joined and realized the scope of Masks for Docs."

In the short time the organization has existed it has grown to more than 5,000 volunteers, with 115 chapters on six continents, and over 1,000 3D printers running round the clock. In their first two weeks, volunteers



COURTESY PHOTO

*As the COVID-19 pandemic caused personal protective equipment shortages across the health care industry, Staff Sgt. Austin Cooperrider, from the 836th Cyberspace Operations Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, did what seems like a simple thing ... he pressed "PRINT."*

like Cooperrider delivered 100,000 masks to front-line health care workers across the globe.

The San Antonio chapter of 20 plus volunteers that Cooperrider organizes has currently produced over 500 face shields and delivered them to local medical treatment facilities as well as the San Antonio Military Health System.

"We have about 300 more ready to be delivered," he said. "As we are still gathering members, our production is expected to grow. The current estimation is that we are producing about 100-150 a day, and will grow as we get more printers up and running."

By partnering with the Bexar County Medical Society he ensured the masks were getting to the right people. The medical society became a distribution point for us and helped deliver to all of the hospitals and smaller clinics in San Antonio and the surrounding area.

According to Cooperrider the

process doesn't require one to be a 3D printing expert to get involved, nor is expensive equipment required.

"Knowledge in 3D printing is actually very minimal," he said. "You can learn most all you need on printing over the course of an evening or two watching YouTube videos. The cost of entry is low to moderate at around \$250 depending on which brand and version you buy. There are some tips and tricks people have learned along the way, but plenty of people are willing to give you advice. All you need is a file of a 3D rendered object, a free slicing tool that makes the computer code, and then your printer to run the code. A few hours later the rendered object is complete."

His involvement had an unexpected side effect in the form of the positive effect it had on his own resiliency.

"When people are required to stay at home and leave for only the bare essentials, it is beneficial to have something to focus

on," he said. "Doubly so, when you feel like you are contributing to the cause. This is an invisible enemy, in a sort of way, and not having the means to combat it makes people feel useless. I found a way to fight and make a difference."

"Even if you don't have a 3D printer, you can still help," Cooperrider added. "There also is a large group of people who sew face masks. San Antonio does not have a sewing presence at this time but Masks for Docs has plenty of people who will help teach you how."

With no vaccine against the COVID-19 virus on the horizon, PPE for health care workers will continue to be in demand. Cooperrider encouraged anyone with an interest in 3D printing, or just supporting their local community, to get involved.

"If anyone would like to join find your local Mask for Docs group," he said, "or if there isn't one, make one."

For more information, go to <https://masksfordocs.com>.

# ‘Translator’ shines in logistics, transportation

By Rachel Kersey

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In late February, as the COVID-19 pandemic began to take a stronger foothold in the United States, 2nd Lt. Himanshu Chopra, the 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron's flight commander of material management, began manning the Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Emergency Operations Center as Emergency Support Function 1/7, working logistics and transportation. His peers and commanders credit him with doing an outstanding job, filling a critical need at a time of international crisis.

“Lt. Chopra has been the ESF 1/7, one of the logistics leads for the COVID-19 response for Joint Base San Antonio, and his work, his direct involvement has been engaged in coordinating a lot of the transportation as well as supply management procurement for the installation,” said Lt. Col. Joey Tortella, director of the JBSA-Lackland Emergency Operations Center.

Chopra's duties have included ensuring that trainees and bus operators are safe from disease transmission while the mission of the U.S. Air Force is ongoing. This encompasses everything from overseeing measures to remove seats from buses to comply with social distancing guidelines espoused by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to making sure that trainees are transported only with others in their same health categories.

In addition, Chopra helped with securing Personal Protective Equipment for bus drivers and custodians, such as surgical masks, gloves and eyewear, as well as ordering disinfectant and sanitizer, all of which are scarce commodities.

Chopra said he secured supplies from multiple sources on behalf of JBSA. The 502nd Contracting Squadron's team's network was able to locate cleaning



PHOTOS BY SARAYUTH PINTHONG / 502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Himanshu Chopra, 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron material management flight commander, talks with Joann Jones, Base Supply Center store manager, May 5, 2020, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.



In late February, Chopra began manning the Emergency Operations Center as Emergency Support Function 1/7, working logistics and transportation, filling a critical need at a time of international crisis.

supplies from the local economy. The Defense Logistics Agency also established a supply chain for masks and facial coverings for JBSA. But both of these sources have been secondary and tertiary.

“The primary source has been the Base Supply Center, also known as San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, who

have done the heavy lifting of sourcing our cleaning supply requirements,” Chopra said.

Even with help from outside agencies, according to Tortella, the EOC can be a very uncomfortable environment. The stress of responding to COVID-19 appropriately can be difficult for many. But Chopra, affectionately called “Chop-

Chop,” handled the pressure deftly.

“He’s been at the forefront of all these (initiatives) and the big thing that has allowed him and the mission to be extremely successful is that he has an incredible can-do attitude,” Tortella said. “He’s very positive, very motivated. He’s an extremely strong leader.”

Born and raised in New Delhi, India, Chopra immigrated to the United States when he was 13 years old to escape a life of poverty. He believes much of his leadership skills under crisis can be traced to his experience surviving a difficult life in India.

He learned flawless English mostly from watching American cartoons and being in English as a Second Language class. After completing high school in New York City, he enlisted in the Air Force in 2006. Since then, he has been stationed in North Dakota, New Jersey and Texas, and has deployed to Guam, Alaska, and Qatar.

After coming to JBSA-Lackland in 2016, he served as a Military Training Instructor, MTI Supervisor and MTI Trainer before commissioning in September 2019 through the Officer Training School's first-ever Accelerated Commissioning Program for prior Senior Non-Commissioned Officers.

Tortella, who has never served as an MTI, said that having Chopra as a new officer on board to help facilitate requests for transportation from the 37th Training Wing has been incredible.

“He’s kind of like a translator, if you want to look at it that way,” Tortella said. “Having him here when some of those requests have come in, he’s able to translate so we understand the operational impact of what it is that they’re asking for and ensure that it’s appropriately resourced or prioritized to meet the needs of the 37th TRW.”

From immigrating to enlisting to cross-country moving and deploying, Chopra is used to changing gears and responding to different environments.

First, he learned the language of America, then the dialect of the military, then the lingo of the Airman, and now the jargon of the officer. All of these experiences have helped to shape him into the leader he is today, but he doesn’t take all the credit for the great work that is being done at the EOC.

Chopra attributes his success to teamwork. He said that in order to provide 24/7 support to the EOC, he split his responsibilities with four other people: 1st Lt. Ryan Pease, 2nd Lt. Lorenzo Martinez, 1st Lt. Matthew Cortes and 2nd Lt. Lauren Dinneen.

“The entire EOC team was great,” he said. “It was amazing to watch everyone working toward the same common goal. There’s a sense of pride and energy in knowing your efforts are valued and you make a difference in JBSA’s efforts to combat COVID-19.”



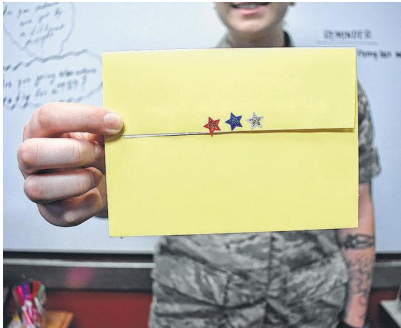
# Laughlin Airman writes ‘Letters to Lackland’

By Senior Airman Anne McCready  
47TH FLYING TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Texas —Airman First Class Cailey Brislin, 434th Squadron Aviation Resource Management (SARM) at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, says she began the Letters to Lackland project when she realized she could make an impact on a trainee who may be feeling lonely — especially in this new climate of physical distancing. She believes getting the opportunity to write words of wisdom has great impacts on Airmen during one of the most formative and vulnerable parts of their Air Force career.



*Brislin began Letters to Lackland in April, and has since gathered more than 50 of her fellow Airmen from around the world to send mail to basic trainees.*



PHOTOS BY 2ND LT. RACHAEL PARKS

*Airman 1st Class Cailey Brislin, 434th Squadron Aviation Resource Management (SARM) at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, writes to Basic Military Training Airmen at Lackland Air Force Base to offer support and words of wisdom.*

## COMMENTARY

# Coping with grief, loss during COVID-19

By Maj. Jessica-Lynn Stanley

37TH TRAINING WING

After tragedies related to COVID-19, the world faces a new challenge – finding ways to mourn loved ones who passed while practicing social distancing and amid travel restrictions.

Travel restrictions and safety procedures in medical facilities may have prevented survivors from visiting a loved one before passing away.

In addition to the physical loss of a loved one, other losses may be experienced. This includes loss of events such as birthdays, promotions, or graduations.

There could also be a lost sense of safety and a shifted worldview. This could be from feeling powerless to protect loved ones or yourself. Some may face the loss of the life they once knew, either through a familial role (spouse, adult child, etc.) or occupation.

Grief is a typical response to loss. Just like any milestone in life, commemorating it is essential in being able to acknowledge, pay respects, and reflect on how you will move forward while keeping the loved one's memory alive.

The grieving process is typically experienced without the help of a clinician. However, due to the unique social and cultural situations the virus has brought, a more mindful grieving approach will be vitally important.

The grieving process will not look the same to everyone. You may take more or less time to grieve than expected. You may not react how you thought you would. It is more important than ever to be compassionate and understanding of your unique grieving process.

Here are some important things to consider to support a healthy process.

### Taking care of the physical self

As stated in the adage, you can't drink from an empty cup. It is important to take care of your physical self.

Grief and stress can bring on appetite and sleep changes. First, be mindful of your sleep routine. Sleeping too much during the day will affect your sleep at night. Keep naps to 30 minutes. Sleeping too much or too little will also harm your mental well-being. Aim for no less than six and no more than nine hours a night.

Take a hard look at your diet. Remove substances (alcohol, caffeine, nicotine,



STAFF SGT. SHANE A. CUOMO

*Even amid social distancing and travel restrictions, there are ways to mourn loved ones and support others who are grieving.*

etc.) that will harm your well-being and sleep in the long term. Consider the foods you are taking in and ensure you are eating at least three times a day.

Also, increase your water intake; not keeping hydrated will make you feel tired and can contribute to headaches.

Lastly, find physical outlets that make you feel accomplished and renewed. Consider a run outside, yoga, or a walk while listening to a positive book/song.

### Seeking shared loss connections

If there is not a way to be physically present for a funeral service, consider finding alternative ways to connect with those who knew the deceased or are going through a similar experience.

Consider sending a flowers to the service or a surviving family member. You could send groceries or prepared food. If able, you could assist with final expenses or planning a private service.

Consider opening a type of phone tree through those sharing the loss. Checking on each other can be done through email, video messaging, phone calls, text, or social media private messaging. Share your feelings and your memories.

Be careful what you share on social media and about tagging family members. They may not feel comfortable, and the timing may be off.

Even though there is a physical separation it does not mean there is an emotional separation. Use technology to

reach out. This will increase connection and assist in the grieving process.

### Seeking online social support

It is beneficial to connect with others going through similar experiences.

These connections allow those grieving to feel understood, exchange educational resources and offer peer support on working through grief. Once restrictions are lifted, it would be beneficial to seek out community support groups.

However, through online platforms, the grieving can connect with others and meet these needs. Here are some organizations that provide grief support:

**TAPS:** Offers compassionate care and resources to all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. TAPs.org or 800-959-TAPS (8277).

**GriefTAPS Share:** Online support with guided support groups. griefshare.org

**Griefnet.org:** An Internet community of people dealing with grief, death, trauma, and major loss. GriefNet.org

**Military OneSource:** Offers information, resources and non-medical counseling to meet the needs of military family members who have lost a loved one. Call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 to speak with a consultant.

### Meaning-making

It is almost impossible to “find the silver lining” when a loved one has passed away. Finding meaning means

connecting with your spiritual beliefs, finding meaning through the survivors' actions, and discovering a new normal.

Connecting with your spiritual beliefs is highly individualized. The grieving process can spark questions of the meaning of life and previously held beliefs.

Individuals with a formalized religious belief may find comfort from their religious leaders or chaplains. Consider working with a religious leader on ways to have a personal ritual (i.e., prayer dedication, or candle lighting).

If you do not have a formalized religion, consider meditation or reading a self-help book on grief.

Finding meaning in a loved one's death doesn't mean forgetting the person. There are ways to memorialize the person. This can be done by running a race, setting up a charity, or creating artwork in their honor. If there is concern about children knowing the loved one, consider setting times to share stories of the deceased.

Find time to think, talk, or write out what the loved one meant to you, what role they played in your life, and what this will mean moving forward. Likewise, consider how your role will be different, how will it be the same, how social/familial roles will change, and what you will have to be mindful of moving forward. This will allow for a more thoughtful grieving process.

If your thoughts become overwhelming or you need support processing these questions, seek support from a counselor. Meaning-making can occur soon after the loss or months after. Do not push yourself through this process.

With COVID-19, it is likely someone you know experienced a loss. There are ways to support them through the loss.

First, ask directly how they are doing. Consider video messaging, text, phone, or email. Do not feel you have to wait for them to ask for something. Send groceries, food or flowers, or clean their yard. You might not be able to sit with the person, but you can be a source of emotional support.

Although these mindful approaches cannot take away all the pain of losing a loved one, they can support the grieving process.

*Maj. Jessica-Lynn Stanley is a licensed independent clinical social worker.*



# RANDOLPH

## San Antonio USO adapts, continues to serve

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIR

The San Antonio United Services Organization centers may be physically closed, with the exception of the San Antonio International Airport location, but the staff continues to serve our community every day.

"We have a full calendar of virtual programming for those who are observing stay-home orders," said Heather Krauss, USO San Antonio director. "Each day we have resiliency programming, fitness challenges, kids activities, motivational moments and various other activities to do. Our goal was to create programming that interests all of the military and dependent demographics we serve. These virtual programs have been extremely popular and encourage interaction between the USO staff, volunteers, military members and families



COURTESY PHOTO

*The USO makes deliveries to Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston and Lackland, April 17, 2020, serving thousands with grab-and-go snacks, meal-to-go boxes, hygiene products and other essential items.*

practicing social distancing."

The USO's mission is to strengthen America's military service members by keeping them connected to family, home and country throughout their

service to the nation.

One of the biggest obstacles is the inability of families to travel and attend the Air Force Basic Military Training graduations.

"We foresaw a need and de-

cided to create a program in which BMT students' families can send us messages for their Airman," Krauss said. "From those messages, we create videos of congratulations and well wishes directly from their family and friends supporting them from home. Airmen can view these videos after graduation and once they have access to their phones again.

"We also let the parents know which video their messages are published in so they have the ability to view, save and send them to their Airmen," Krauss added. "Every single week, we reach about 20,000 people, spreading joy at a time that has been quite difficult. It is just a little connection piece from home to increase morale. This has been a hugely successful program and a really good resource for families that cannot be here in person to celebrate

this milestone and most memorable moment with their Airmen."

Also, Krauss added, "The Fort Sam Houston and Downton USO centers are delivering emergent necessities and morale to JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and JBSA-Lackland. They are making deliveries to JBSA trainees, quarantined trainees, and permanent party populations. We are delivering grab-and-go snacks, hygiene products, meal-to-go boxes, hand sanitizer and various items for morale. We are arranging USO2GO kits, which are kits in the form of a very large care package for military units."

To help dining facilities at JBSA-Fort Sam and JBSA-Lackland observe social-distancing regulations and still meet the daily needs of the extremely

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## New 'normal' mental health services still means quality care

By Senior Master Sgt. Amanda Frampton

AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
COMMAND MENTAL HEALTH & DDR  
FUNCTIONAL MANAGE

During this time of uncertainty, it may feel like we're being pulled in 500 different directions and asked to continue with our "normal" operations as much as possible and support other demands levied upon us.

Our Mental Health Technicians (4Cs) in Air Education and Training Command are redefining what "normal" is during the pandemic while still delivering quality patient care and providing Disaster Mental Health services when requested.

To maintain social distancing and protect the health of our staff and patients, the majority of patient care has transitioned to telehealth.

The 4Cs are still conducting triages, assessments, and individual and group counseling sessions, and have rapidly adapted to a video-teleconference platform. This allows for patients to receive care during COVID and reduces the risk of contracting the virus. Technicians are completing assessments over the phone or video platform, having a provider complete the safety assessment and determine future needs.

Along with most other career fields, technicians have altered

their duty schedules and shifts to best support the delivery of care and minimize the number of staff in the clinic at one time.

In addition to clinical care, 4Cs and Mental Health Providers across AETC have partnered with other support agencies to include Chaplains, Military Family Life Consultants, or MFLCs, and installation Violence Prevention Intergrators, or VPIs, to provide DMH outreach to units on managing COVID-19 stress and anxiety.

At Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, technicians created distraction bags filled with crossword puzzles, word searches, jigsaw puzzles and other goodies to distribute to

quarantined students to help pass the time while under movement restrictions. Technicians assigned to Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at Lackland AFB are also heavily involved with DMH visits to the Basic Trainee population.

Technician teams conduct daily walkabouts with the quarantined trainees to check on their mental well-being. In addition, technicians continue educating trainees on how to recognize symptoms of depression and anxiety, and teaching deep breathing and meditation techniques to help manage stress.

Many flights in AETC have put together newsletters and informational tips that leaders

may distribute to their units on curbing boredom, managing stress and anxiety, remaining socially connected while maintaining social distancing and when to seek additional help.

Mental Health technicians are not only taking on additional roles within their flights but supporting the groups and wings they are assigned to. Many are performing in roles such as infection control monitors, securing appropriate donning/doffing of PPE. They assist in screening stations, interviewing patients for symptoms of COVID-19 and confirming use of the proper protection prior to entering the facility or when additional testing is required.

# 12th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron keeps Texans flying



*Shevon Vaciana, 12th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, conducts routine maintenance by inspecting the front tire of a T-6 Texan aircraft at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph April 7.*

PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN FASKE



*Shevon Vaciana, 12th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, inspects the propeller of a T-6 Texan aircraft at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph April 7.*



*Greg Garcia, 12th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, checks the oil of a T-6 Texan aircraft at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph April 7.*

## USO ADAPTS

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large trainee population, the USO makes regular deliveries of To Go Meal Boxes.

"With this resource, the students can do a grab-and-go meal from the dining facilities since social-distancing regulations put a great strain on the number of people utilizing the dining facilities at a time," Krauss said. "We have tried to alleviate some of that burden and help create an environment to accommodate a large number of students. We've delivered thousands of to-go meal boxes. This way they can grab meals and go back to their room or their classes or wherever they're permitted to take them. Additionally, the meal to-go boxes are also being used to feed people who are being quarantined."

The USO at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston has creatively transformed its movie nights and now hosts virtual Netflix Movie Nights every Friday.

"We set up the Netflix party link through our Netflix central account, sharing it to our Facebook page, which allows access from your personal account," Krauss said. "Similar to a chat room, everyone signed into the Netflix party link can chat with each other during the movie. We have a moderator on staff that is online to answer questions and mediate comments."

As a nonprofit focused on direct service mission delivery, the USO has met challenges during this COVID-19 pandemic.

"We love working with people, and we love to be in the company of our clients to support our military members and their families," Krauss said.

The USO is continuing to serve transitioning service members and their families.

"We are continuing all of our transitioning programming online via virtual Zoom and Microsoft Teams meetings," Krauss said.

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/USO.SanAntonio/](http://www.facebook.com/USO.SanAntonio/) or [www.sanantonio.uso.org](http://www.sanantonio.uso.org)