

JBSA

LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

JUNE 5, 2020



JASON W. EDWARDS

Members of the 555th Forward Surgical Team assess a simulated patient during training with Brooke Army Medical Center's Strategic Trauma Readiness Center of San or STaRC, at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis May 26. The STaRC training program uses a combination of didactic and hands-on learning to prepare the 555th for deployment.

BAMC training program prepares surgical team for deployment

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Reserve Citizen Airmen help transportation efforts amid pandemic

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Feasibility of second AF BMT location proven

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AF fitness testing suspended until Oct. 1

From Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

In an effort to reduce exposure to Airmen and to continue to slow the spread of COVID-19, Air Force officials announced May 22 all official fitness testing is suspended until Oct. 1.

The change, which is an update from the original June 1 resume date, is effective immediately.

Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, said in a signed memo, "Airmen remain our top priority, and we will ensure their health and safety as we maintain our force readiness posture."

"When testing resumes, the Air Force will take a systematic approach to reintegrating official physical fitness assessments," Kelly said in the memo. "All policies and

procedures should reinforce physical distancing, use of personal protective equipment, Airmen health and personal hygiene, and cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting workspaces and common areas."

In March, officials canceled fitness assessments until June 1. Airmen who were scheduled to test in March, April and May received new test dates that were delayed by six months.

The latest change, which is subject to local health conditions and states, "Commanders shall begin assessing Airmen's fitness on Oct. 1, 2020 contingent upon base fitness centers being reopened and local state/country travel and movement restrictions being lifted."

Additionally:
 ▶ If fitness centers remain closed and local movement

restrictions remain in place, commanders may choose to delay physical fitness assessment resumption beyond Oct. 1, 2020 until safe conditions are available.

An Airmen's next scheduled fitness assessment will be based on the date of their last official assessment and fitness category.

▶ In order to maintain the health and safety of the force as testing resumes, the abdominal circumference component will be temporarily suspended through Oct. 1, 2021, or until further notice. During this period, all Airmen will receive a temporary, one-year abdominal circumference component exemption, and the next scheduled test date will be based on the overall fitness score. This one-year temporary abdominal circumference exemption will take precedence over any other shorter-term

temporary abdominal circumference exemptions.

▶ The annual height and weight measurements taken in conjunction with the fitness assessment will be temporarily suspended until further notice in order to preserve the health and safety of the force.

▶ Physical training leaders augmenting the Fitness Assessment Cell may test members from within their same unit to help provide commanders with capacity options.

▶ Commanders should use the four-month delay to purchase appropriate equipment (e.g., toe bars) to aid in physical distancing and administration of official physical fitness assessments in a safe and healthy environment.

For more information, Airmen should visit MyPers and/or contact their chain of command.

DOD officials unveil COVID-related personnel, move guidance

By Jim Garamone
 DOD NEWS

Defense Department officials outlined a conditions-based approach to relaxing the stop-movement order that has been in effect since early March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper issued the order in early March, and in April, he extended the ban through June 30.

At a Pentagon news conference May 26, Matthew P. Donovan, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said Esper signed a memo lifting the June 30 travel restrictions and transitioning to a conditions-based phased approach for personnel movement and travel.

"While the COVID-19 pandemic still presents an overall risk to our service members, civilians and their families, varying conditions across the nation warrant this transition to a tailored approach," Donovan told reporters.

The conditions to resume travel will be based on two overarching factors, Donovan said. First, the resumption of unrestricted travel must align with state and regional criteria based on the guidelines of the White House's Opening Up America guidance. DOD and base officials also will adhere to guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Donovan said.

"Consideration of factors such

as removal of shelter-in-place orders and a downward trend of new COVID-19 cases over the preceding 14 days will be used to make a determination for the resumption of movement between states, regions and nations," the undersecretary said.

The second set of factors incorporates the evaluation of installation-level conditions. "This includes items such as whether there are local travel restrictions, sufficient capacity of medical treatment facilities or local hospitals, testing capability and capacity and the availability of essential services such as schools and child care," he said. "These factors will be carefully considered before movement decisions are made."

The Pentagon reservation — the building and many leased spaces in the national capital region — has made tremendous progress and officials have seen a downward trend in coronavirus cases for 10 days, DOD Chief Management Officer Lisa W. Hershman said.

"We've been able to isolate,

trace and mitigate any spread," she said. "To date, our teams have cleaned and sanitized over 1 million square feet of office space on the Pentagon reservation to CDC standards."

The telework effort has enabled more than two-thirds of the Pentagon reservation workforce to continue to deliver the mission at alternate work locations, the CMO noted.

Hershman said the "resilience plan" is based on local conditions and is not set to any specific date. The plan builds on the White House Opening Up America plan and has five phases leading to a full opening, she said. As the plan moves along, she added, if there is a resurgence in the spread of coronavirus, DOD officials will reassess the department's protection measures and workforce phase and respond appropriately.

"The plan provides guidance to commanders, supervisors and employees to safely and effectively return to Pentagon reservation offices," Hershman said.

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 using the subject line "Feedback Fridays." Questions will be further researched and published as information becomes available.

Installation & Facilities

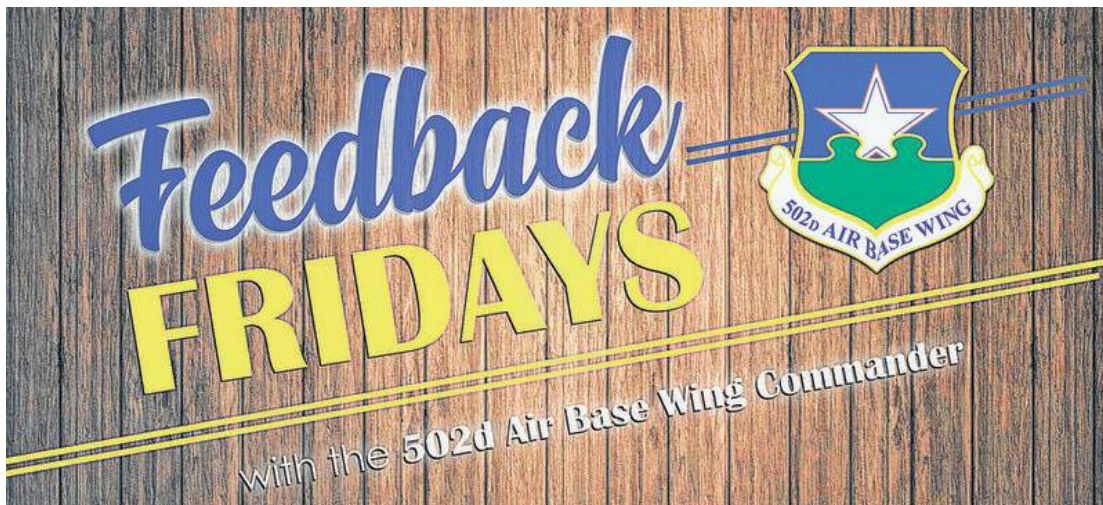
Q. My husband (active duty sponsor) has been told by the Community Housing Office that he will be required to sign a lease and pay the prorated rent due BEFORE being allowed to step foot into a military family home.

As a spouse, it seems unreasonable, if not borderline illegal, to expect a family to sign a binding lease agreement with a landlord or agency before being allowed to see the condition of the property.

Any existing damages, issues impacting health and safety, and other such concerns have to be addressed in the lease before signing in order for the landlord to be legally accountable for the appropriate resolution. He has also been advised neither of us will be able to attend the inspection walkthrough.

I appreciate the abundance of concern due to the current Department of Defense directives; however, I have not found any directive that protects my family if any issues aren't addressed that should have been notated and agreed upon prior to a legal agreement being signed. If such directives exist, I would appreciate a copy for personal records and possible future protection from unjust garnishment.

If contact with new tenants is so concerning that we cannot observe social distance guidelines while wearing masks in order to attend a walkthrough (three people maximum), then we should not be required to sign the lease inside the



COURTESY GRAPHIC

community center (unknown number of possible exposure risks).

The exclusion of provisions to protect the tenant (walk-through and inspection) cannot be matters of convenience while protection of the organization (lease agreement) is mandatory.

Please know, I have no desire to create any issues with the privatized housing agents within the Lackland Community Housing Center. I appreciate they are only stating policies provided by their organization. I look forward to your insight and guidance in protecting incoming families during these unprecedented times.

A. Thank you very much for your question and for bringing this to my attention. Our Civil Engineer team reached out to our JBSA-Lackland privatized housing partner, Belford Beatty Communities, or BBC, to obtain more information on this matter and help resolve to avoid future reoccurrences.

Bottom line, you are correct that no lease agreement should be signed nor deposit paid without first providing the prospective tenant with the opportunity to inspect the property, ask questions, highlight concerns and obtain resolution as necessary.

This is and has been BBC's policy, although it appears to have been miscommunicated during your recent

experience. BBC leadership met with their leasing team to review their policy, to include recent adjustments due to COVID-19, to ensure everyone's awareness and avoid future reoccurrence.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, BBC did modify their move-in process to meet CDC guidelines, limiting physical interaction and putting six feet of distance between all parties in order to protect tenants and BBC employees.

This modification does not conflict with BBC's policy to schedule appointments with the incoming member to conduct a tour and an inspection of the home once it has been matched to the prospective tenant.

BBC does provide lease documents and addendums via email prior to the tour appointment for review in preparation should the member decide to accept the home. On the day of the tour, BBC, along with the prospective tenant, will inspect the home, demonstrate how things work and answer any questions.

If the member elects to proceed with the move-in process, BBC will conduct the lease signing, obtain the move-in prorate amount and provide the new tenant with keys to their new home. Again, this appointment would not require the member to sign the lease and submit the prorated amount prior to the appointment.

I'm very sorry for the unfortunate

experience you encountered, especially knowing how stressful moving homes can be; however, I am truly grateful for your feedback as it has provided us the opportunity to improve our processes and service to our customers.

For any further questions or issues on housing that you are not able to resolve directly with our privatized housing partners, please contact the Civil Engineer's Military Housing Office at 210-671-1840 for assistance.

Q. When did the parking lot for building 393 (across the street from the Vehicle Maintenance Building on JBSA-Randolph) become free trailer parking?

There are a LOT of personal use trailers parked there and have been for a LONG time. I was under the impression that there isn't any personal trailer parking on base, except for the RV parking that the FSS runs and that costs money.

A. Thank you for bringing your concern to my attention. You are correct, there is a designated RV parking area that is run by our FSS, and these designated areas are the only spots allowed for trailer parking. We have passed your observation to our Security Forces team, and they are policing the lot to ensure that all parked vehicles are in compliance with JBSA guidelines.

Q. Please have your T-38s stop flying

FEEDBACK FRIDAYS continues on 4

Mortgage, housing assistance website available for veterans impacted by COVID-19

From Department of
Veterans Affairs
Public Affairs

To ensure homeowners and renters have current and accurate housing assistance information during the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, along with several other agencies, launched a new unified mortgage and housing assistance website at www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/mortgage-and-housing-assistance/.

Veterans and service members with a VA home loan, other homeowners with a federally backed mortgage and tenants living in properties with a federally backed mortgage have relief options if they have been financially impacted by COVID-19.

"VA is committed to ensuring Veterans and service members have the financial tools available to make



decisions that work for their unique situations," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This collaboration provides an invaluable resource, enabling all homeowners and renters to access up-to-date information regarding their housing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic."

The joint website with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Federal Housing Finance Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development

consolidates mortgage relief options, protections for renters, resources for additional help and information on how to avoid COVID-19 related scams. It also provides tools for homeowners to determine if their mortgage is federally backed and for renters to find out if their rental unit is financed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, VA continues providing home loan services

"VA is committed to ensuring Veterans and service members have the financial tools available to make decisions that work for their unique situations. This collaboration provides an invaluable resource, enabling all homeowners and renters to access up-to-date information regarding their housing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie

to veterans and service members who have earned those benefits, working with lenders, servicers and appraisers on temporary measures to assist in processing and servicing VA home loans.

These measures include offering alternatives for appraisers to determine property value in lieu of interior inspections and providing lenders with additional information to close loans remotely. Such

alternative procedures help ensure VA borrowers can close on a home even during this pandemic and prevent foreclosures when possible.

VA borrowers experiencing financial hardship because of COVID-19 can review VA guidance for borrowers and either request forbearance through the mortgage loan servicer collecting their monthly payments or call 877-827-3702 to speak with a VA Home Loan Representative.

FEEDBACK FRIDAYS

From page 3

anywhere near my house. They are far louder than advertised on the Compatible Use Study. They completely prevent normal activities such as talking to others, having meetings, studying, or sleeping.

Some of us sometimes get home at SUNRISE after a full night of being responsible for lives, and we have to sleep during the day. The T-38s can be limited to one takeoff and one straight in landing instead of doing closed patterns and VFR patterns.

By comparison, the T-1s are very friendly in terms of noise. Firstly, they are very quiet. Secondly, they don't do patterns over my house every day. I hardly ever see T-1s here. The T-38s could be ordered not to do patterns here but they continue to do

so even after many complaints. I don't want T-38s anywhere near my house or even within 5 miles since they are so loud.

A. Thank you for taking the time to contact us regarding the aircraft noise at JBSA-Randolph. We take each complaint seriously and give each its due process.

Each and every complaint is diligently researched and thoroughly analyzed. We evaluate and assess all conditions involved by reviewing aircraft data, pilot flight planning, flight routes, and when needed, review of aircraft on-board video recordings, nothing is left to chance.

JBSA flying training operations are critical to national defense, and the 12th Flying Training Wing is trusted with producing qualified pilots that protect and defend our nation and its allies.

We remain sensitive to our neighbors in the local community who work various shifts and are impacted by the

aircraft noise; however, the flying training syllabus requires a certain number of takeoffs and landings in order to ensure the safety and proficiency of instructors and student pilots.

We appreciate your understanding as we safely train instructor pilots in the world's greatest Air Force. For further questions, please contact 12th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs at 210-652-1272.

Q. My husband was at the shoppette recently and there was another patron in there without a mask. When my husband asked the cashier about the mask-wearing policy, the cashier informed my husband that they are unable to enforce mask wearing in the shoppette, and they will continue to serve them whether they have a mask or not. Is that accurate?

A. Thank you for your question. Under

the Secretary of Defense's direction, all individuals on DOD property, installations, and facilities are required to wear a cloth face covering when they cannot maintain six feet of physical distance in public areas or work centers. This includes Total Force Military Personnel, DOD civilian employees, family members, DOD contractors, and all other individuals on DOD property/installations/facilities.

Unfortunately, even under that mandate, the Exchange cannot refuse service to any authorized customers that do not follow the facial covering guidelines, and they are also not required to challenge any customers on their lack of facial covering prior to any Exchange facilities.

However, we ask that members of our JBSA community continue to follow DOD direction and CDC guidance to ensure the health and safety of our community.

Thrift Savings Plan waives penalties for coronavirus-related early withdrawals

By Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many people may be experiencing financial burdens they had not planned for. For participants in the federal Thrift Savings Plan, there may be an early withdrawal or loan option they can utilize to help ease their financial situation and the stress that comes with it.

The administrators of the Thrift Savings Plan have developed a coronavirus-related distribution option for qualified participants.

“The distribution option, which the Internal Revenue Service defines as a withdrawal, can be made from an eligible retirement plan to a qualified individual between Jan. 1 and Dec. 30, 2020, up to an aggregate limit of \$100,000 from all plans and IRAs,” said Melissa Schmidt, a financial consultant at the Military and Family Readiness Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

To qualify for the distribution, an eligible participant must meet at least one of the following requirements:

- » You have been diagnosed with the virus SARS-CoV-2 or with coronavirus disease 2019, also known as COVID-19, by a test approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- » Your spouse or dependent, as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, has been diagnosed with such virus or disease by such a test.
- » You are experiencing adverse financial consequences as a result of being quarantined, being furloughed or laid off, or having work hours reduced due to such virus or disease; being unable to work due to lack of child care due to such virus or disease; due to the closing or reducing hours of a business

owned or operated by the individual due to such virus or disease; or other factors as determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, or the Secretary's delegate.

Schmidt encourages TSP participants to carefully consider whether to make a withdrawal from their TSP and suggests doing plenty of research to determine the future implications a distribution may cause.

“A TSP distribution may be an option, but once you withdraw from your account, you will be reducing the amount of funds you are currently investing into your retirement,” Schmidt said.

There are additional implications to consider as well.

“Usually, when a person is debating on whether to withdraw funds from their TSP, there are three major concerns,” Schmidt said. “Penalty, tax and repayment are all things to consider.”

Penalty

Normally, there is a penalty for withdrawing funds from a TSP account early, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

“This is often a major concern for individuals who are considering a withdrawal from their TSP,” Schmidt said. “If you designate your withdrawal as a coronavirus-related distribution when you file your taxes, the IRS will waive the 10 percent additional tax on early distributions. By having no withdraw penalty, this allows a person to retain all the money they are withdrawing, which does not occur under ordinary circumstances.”

Taxes due

Even though the additional tax, or penalty, is waived, income taxes on distributions may still apply, depending on the type of account from which you withdraw funds.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

There are traditional and Roth accounts within TSP, and an important concept to understand at the outset is that, except for withdrawals that you've specified as all-traditional or all-Roth, withdrawals are taken proportionally.

“For example, if the Roth balance makes up 30 percent of your total TSP account, every withdrawal you make will be 30 percent Roth. And if that Roth balance contains 40 percent contributions and 60 percent earnings, then 40 percent of the Roth portion of your withdrawal will be treated as contributions and 60 percent will be treated as earnings,” according to TSP.

Whichever account you decide to withdraw funds from, the good news is that the applicable tax payments may be made over time.

“The taxable income from withdrawals made by qualified individuals may be spread ‘ratably’ over a three-year period, starting with the year in which you receive your distribution,” Schmidt said. “For example, if you receive a \$9,000 coronavirus-related distribution in 2020, you could report \$3,000 in income on your federal income tax return for each of 2020, 2021 and 2022.

This will help spread your tax bill over three years versus paying it all at once.”

This information is explained fully at <https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/tsp-536.pdf>.

Repayment option

If you would like to make a withdrawal from your TSP, but you do not want to pay the applicable taxes, you have the option to repay the funds as if they were a loan.

“If you are a qualified individual, you may repay all or part of the amount of a coronavirus-related distribution to an eligible retirement plan, provided you complete the repayment within three years after the date you received the distribution,” Schmidt said. “If you repay a coronavirus-related distribution, the distribution will be treated as though it were repaid in a direct, plan-to-plan transfer, so you would not owe federal income tax on the distribution.”

The repayment plan is not for everyone.

“This option is for someone who knows they will be able to repay the loan within three years,” Schmidt said. “There will be no income tax penalty if you repay within that timeframe. If you do not repay,

there could be a substantial penalty.

“The downside to withdrawing from your TSP is that the money withdrawn is no longer an investment and has now become a debt that must either be repaid or have taxes paid on,” Schmidt said. “This is not free money!”

The availability of coronavirus-related distribution options from TSP is a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, which created special rules for most types of TSP withdrawals made by participants affected by COVID-19, Schmidt said. But she encourages participants to do their research and ask questions if they do not fully understand the options and their implications.

“We understand that this is a very serious situation, and if you are contemplating making a TSP withdrawal, please consult with a financial consultant at your Military and Family Readiness Center to discuss how it might affect your future financial goals,” Schmidt said. “We are available to virtually meet with people to review their decision on whether or not to withdraw from their TSP, and we can help them establish a repayment plan if they chose that route.”

To request assistance from a financial consultant at JBSA, TSP participants may call one of the local Military and Family Readiness Centers at JBSA-Lackland, 210-671-3722; JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, 210-221-2705; or JBSA-Randolph, 210-652-5321. If connected to voicemail, please leave a detailed message indicating financial planning assistance is needed.

Additional information may be found at <https://www.tsp.gov/whatsnew/Content/coronavirus/index.html#cares-update-loans>.

FORT SAM HOUSTON

New BAMC trauma training program prepares surgical team for deployment

By Lori Newman

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brooke Army Medical Center is conducting the first of its kind pre-deployment trauma readiness training exercise for the 555th Forward Surgical Team from May 18 to June 6.

The new Strategic Trauma Readiness Center of San Antonio, or STaRC, will use a combination of didactic and hands-on learning to prepare the 555th for deployment. Known as the “Triple Nickel,” the 555th Forward Surgical Team is a decorated trauma surgical detachment under the 9th Hospital Center, 1st Medical Brigade, from Fort Hood, Texas.

“This program is unlike any other pre-deployment trauma readiness training in that it takes the best of all training modalities and combines it into one three-week program,” said Army Col. (Dr.) Tyson Becker, BAMC STaRC director.

The program leverages the expertise and capabilities across multiple healthcare disciplines at BAMC, the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, the Joint Trauma System and the Air Force's 59th Medical Wing to provide deploying surgical teams with the most realistic and comprehensive wartime skills certification.

“We have all of the resources in one place to do everything that a deploying trauma team needs before they deploy,” Becker said, “to include a Joint Trauma Service-led Emergency War Surgery Course with



JASON W. EDWARDS

Members of the 555th Forward Surgical Team prepare a simulated trauma patient for surgery during training with the Strategic Trauma Readiness Center of San Antonio, or STaRC, at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston May 28.

trauma labs, a live-fire field training exercise at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis with the support of the Medical Center of Excellence, and BAMC, the Department of Defense's only Level I trauma center where the team will take trauma call.”

What makes STaRC truly unique is its comprehensive assessment plan, which standardizes the implementation of various tools to measure individual clinical competency and team proficiency. STaRC is also the first to develop a phased curriculum based on the DOD Trauma Registry caseload and performance data. Additionally, the program can also be adapted to meet the needs of a variety of surgical teams.

During the first week of the exercise, the entire 20-person

team will attend an Emergency War Surgery Course hosted by the 59th Medical Wing at JBSA-Lackland. The surgical team will then break down into two 10-man teams for the remainder of the exercise to replicate split operations during the unit's deployment. Each team will experience realistic training scenarios at JBSA-Camp Bullis during a live-fire field training exercise. They will also receive clinical instruction from military trauma experts at BAMC and the USAISR.

“The focus of this training is on life-saving interventions needed for damage control resuscitation and damage control surgery in the deployed forward surgical environment,” Becker said. “To achieve this, every single member of the team will understand their role

in trauma care, perform necessary critical procedures, and cross-train for force multiplication.”

Becker said the training exercise came about because of the combination of the right people at the right time. BAMC Commanding General Army Brig. Gen. Wendy Harter was previously the command surgeon at U.S. Army Forces Command. FORSCOM is responsible for providing expeditionary, regionally engaged, campaign-capable land forces to combatant commanders.

“Gen. Harter recognized all the resources we have here in San Antonio to train trauma teams,” Becker said.

That, combined with the drive of Air Force Col. (Dr.) Patrick Osborn, BAMC Deputy Commander for Surgical

Services, to make trauma readiness a priority and Becker's deployed trauma experience led to the creation of STaRC.

“We believe BAMC is the ideal location to stand up a Trauma Readiness Center due to the existing alliances and partnerships across this joint market here,” Harter said. “We are proud to add this first of its kind pre-deployment training to San Antonio, the ‘home of military medicine.’”

“Currently, each service has established separate Trauma Training Centers at civilian hospitals throughout the U.S. to sustain critical wartime medical readiness skills,” explained Osborn. “Our program offers the added benefit of a realistic battlefield experience at Camp Bullis.”

“To build trauma readiness prior to deploying, surgical units must achieve tactical and operational proficiency through individual and collective training that is tough, realistic, iterative, and battle-focused,” he added. “Through the STaRC program, BAMC's goal is to serve as the premier training platform for operational trauma readiness. We will assess and validate the readiness of DOD's deploying medical professionals and impart BAMC's trauma mindset on these teams to improve combat casualty care.”

Becker agrees.

“This program will benefit military medicine by enhancing trauma skills for team members of the deploying surgical unit and can increase the odds that U.S. service members come home alive,” he said.

Medical Readiness Training Command Reserve laboratory officer in fight against COVID-19

By Sgt. 1st Class Michele Uitermarkt
MEDICAL READINESS AND TRAINING COMMAND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

"We have an obligation to the American people to keep our Soldiers healthy in order to serve in this fight, and I am proud to have been a part of that," said Lt. Col. Maria Espiritu, an Army Reserve clinical laboratory officer who oversees COVID-19 testing at multiple laboratories in the U.S. for mobilized military medical professionals.

Espiritu mobilized from her home in Duluth, Georgia, to Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston April 4 to manage clinical laboratory operations for the 807th Medical Command.

Espiritu and her team of approximately 80 Soldiers from various Army Reserve units are also responsible for providing COVID-19 test kits and other medical supplies to mobilized medical professionals. She is responsible for ensuring that the lab testing is compliant with the guidelines and regulatory requirements set by multiple federal agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, as well as the U.S. Army's Office of the Surgeon General.

"An important part of our mission is to provide testing for military personnel mobilized to fight the coronavirus," Espiritu said.

Espiritu is a graduate of the Medical University of South Carolina at Charleston, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology and a Masters of Public Health. Espiritu is certified as a medical technologist and a clinical laboratory scientist who lives in Duluth, Georgia, with her husband and teenage daughter. A project manager for a technology company that develops software for clinical laboratories and public health agencies, she manages projects that modernize and improve laboratory capabilities.

Espiritu is a member of the Medical Readiness Training Command, also based at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston. MRTC provides advanced medical training by leading several annual field exercises, such as Global Medic, for more than 2,000 troops across all branches of the U.S. military alongside multi-national allies including Canada,



SGT. 1ST CLASS MICHELE UITERMARKT

Lt. Col. Maria Espiritu, a clinical laboratory officer, works at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston April 20 in support of the Department of Defense COVID-19 Response mission.

Germany and Britain.

More than 1,200 Army Reserve medical professionals mobilized as Urban Augmentation Medical Task Forces, or UAMTFs, as part of the Department of Defense's response to COVID-19, led by U.S. Northern

Command.

These 85-person teams augment the civilian medical community by delivering a wide range of critical medical capabilities. Each team consists of doctors, nurses, combat medics, and respiratory therapists. The Reserve medical professionals work alongside active duty medical specialists representing all services of the military.

U.S. Army North deployed the rapid integration of medical capabilities in several locations around the country while maintaining a flexible and prompt response to the emerging needs as part of the Department of Defense's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Espiritu expects to return home in a few weeks after capturing the lessons learned from the COVID-19 Response to assist future generations of military medical professionals.

"As lab officers, we are always in the background doing our part for the military, but this pandemic has brought our small career field squarely into the forefront," Espiritu said. "It has been an honor to serve my country and play a role in helping people in their time of need."

BAMC Auxiliary donates gifts

By Daniel J. Calderón
BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Brooke Army Medical Center Auxiliary held its annual welfare grants distribution May 20 at the BAMC Main Entrance.

"Typically, we hold the distribution in the auditorium during a ceremony in March, but because of current events we were not able to do that," said Sarah Kelly, BAMC Auxiliary president. "We were able to give away about \$17,000 worth of goods."

Kelly said the gifts are items requested by various departments throughout BAMC that are not usually in the budget. Items range from coloring books for kids to a

new phone charging station the Auxiliary bought for the BAMC Emergency Department this year.

"We try to fill a need that departments can't always get filled with other funds," she said.

The BAMC Auxiliary conducts fundraisers throughout the year so they can purchase the items they give to departments. Members of BAMC's staff said they are grateful for the work done by the Auxiliary and the donations they make.

"We had an idea that we wanted to be able to provide something for our patients who come in and need more information," said Shawna Monk, a registered nurse in the Department of Family and

Community Medicine at the Spc. Taylor Burk Clinic at JBSA Camp Bullis. "So, we asked the BAMC Auxiliary if we could get the supplies for a coffee station. They provided us with everything we needed to get that started."

Monk said the coffee station will help patients who come in have a place to sit and relax while they read the information on applications such as secure messaging and how to fill out surveys for their care. Secure messaging is a way for patients to contact their medical providers, giving them an alternative to having to come into the clinic for information.

Other items the Auxiliary donated were books for a patient library, yoga



DANIEL J. CALDERÓN

The Brooke Army Medical Center Auxiliary held its annual welfare grants distribution May 20 at the BAMC Main Entrance.

instructional books, and infant CPR mannequins. BAMC staff can provide CPR training for new parents who may be unfamiliar or nervous about giving CPR to their babies if they don't know how to

administer it. Mannequins help provide staff the means to give new parents training and increase their confidence.

"We're just happy to be able to provide whatever we can to help the staff here," Kelly said.

Fort Sam Houston Elementary takes top spot in nationwide recycling contest

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

During the past school year, students and teachers at Fort Sam Houston Elementary School collected more than a million pounds of recycling materials, which earned the school the top prize in a nationwide recycling contest.

Fort Sam Houston Elementary School came out on top in the PepsiCo Recycle Rally contest, a nationwide competition in which more than 2,000 schools in grades pre-K-12 competed to raise the most amount of recycling materials. For taking first in the contest, the school received the grand prize worth \$50,000.

The contest was held from August to March when it was cut short because of COVID-19. Still, the Cougar Cub Recycling Club, which was formed by Fort Sam Houston Elementary School students and teachers at the beginning of the school year, was able to collect 1.4 million pounds of recyclable materials, including water bottles and aluminum cans, easily surpassing the club's goal of 20,000 pounds.

Paul Perea, Fort Sam Houston Elementary School music teacher and recycling club sponsor, said the school surpassed its 20,000-pound goal by the end of August.

"I knew then that we were on to something really big," Perea said.

Perea said the idea for starting the club and a recycling program at the school came about as a result of discussions he had with Fort Sam Houston Elementary Principal Dr. Joseph Cerna before the start of the 2019-20 school year.

He said his discussions with Cerna focused on what the school's students could do that



COURTESY PHOTO

Toni Johnson, Fort Sam Houston Elementary School assistant principal, lends a helping hand in collecting recyclable materials for the school's recycling program.

would make a positive impact on the school and the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston community.

"I said, 'What if we started something like a recycling program?'" Perea said.

Starting a recycling club and program at a school was something Perea had done before. Before he started teaching at Fort Sam Houston Elementary in 2019, he started a recycling program at an elementary school he taught at in San Antonio. That school won the PepsiCo Recycle Rally contest two years in a row.

Using his experience and expertise, Perea was able to get the support of students and teachers in helping to start the recycling club and establishing a recycling program at the school. He credits the participation of students, teachers and elementary school parents for the program's success and for helping the school win the contest.

"It goes back to our great

students and parents who helped our program and the teachers who are passionate about our eco-system," Perea said. "If we can separate waste from recyclable goods, we are making a big difference, a difference of 1.4 million (pounds of recyclable materials) not going into the garbage."

Perea said the recycling effort at the school took off because teachers instilled into students the need to recycle and help the environment. In turn, the students were able to convince their parents and the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston community to do the same thing.

"Students became the teachers in teaching parents how to recycle," Perea said.

Cerna and Nita Ford-Hightower, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston school liaison officer, helped the recycling club expand its outreach by connecting them to community partners within JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, who participated in

the recycling program. Community participants included Brooke Army Medical Center, Lincoln Military Housing, W. Ed Parker Youth Center, Wounded Warriors, Parkwood Housing Area, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston School Liaison Office and Cole High School Junior ROTC Department.

Each month these community partners sent a tally of their recyclable materials to the school, boosting the school's total amount collected for the PepsiCo Recycle Rally.

In addition, local community business partners, including Gunn Nissan and Lifetime Fitness, also contributed their recycling materials to the school's collection.

Cerna said what the Cougar Cub Recycling Club accomplished went beyond winning a nationwide recycling contest.

"It changed a lot of behaviors of teachers, students and

"We want it to become part of our culture of service and protecting the Earth. We always wanted to find a way for faculty, parents and students to work together. This was a simple way to do it."

Dr. Joseph Cerna, Fort Sam Houston Elementary Principal

community members on recycling," Cerna said. "It became something that helped bring us together. We were filling up about 16 to 20 recycling bins a week at the school."

He said the efforts of the club and the recycling program helped improve discipline and instruction at the elementary school because it gave students a common purpose and something to be engaged in.

"We want it to become part of our culture of service and protecting the Earth," Cerna said. "We always wanted to find a way for faculty, parents and students to work together. This was a simple way to do it."

Cerna said proceeds from the PepsiCo Recycle Rally contest grand prize awarded to the school will be used to support school projects and organizations, including a student media production club, campus beautification projects promoting recycling, and the Cole High School Junior ROTC.

BAMC doctor returns from NYC to hero's welcome

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Lt. Col. (Dr.) G. Travis Clifton returned to a hero's welcome last week after a deployment unlike any he'd experienced in his 14-year Army career.

Clifton's Brooke Army Medical Center colleagues, wife Elizabeth and three sons surprised the doctor with a COVID-19-safe drive-by welcome home parade May 17.

"It was a big surprise," said Clifton, after nearly a dozen cars circled his neighborhood with hand-drawn signs and balloons. "It was nice to be welcomed back with open arms."

Rather than the familiar rugged terrain of Afghanistan, this West Point graduate had been sent to serve in a surreal battleground of narrow streets and sky-high towers, helping to fight an embattled city's war against an unseen and unprecedented enemy.

Clifton, BAMC's chief of general surgery and a surgical oncologist, was one of nearly 40 healthcare professionals from BAMC who deployed to New York City in late March to help alleviate a hospital system overwhelmed by patients suffering from COVID-19.

Earlier that month, a few dozen cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed. By late March, reports indicated the number had risen to over 36,000 cases across the city's five boroughs, with nearly 800 deaths.

To help care for urgent but non-COVID-19 cases, the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort docked in New York City March 30. Meanwhile, Clifton joined a team of 800 Army and Navy medical personnel to help transform the Jacob K. Javits Center, a massive convention center in Manhattan, into an alternate care facility.

"Our main effort was to turn the Javits Center in just one week from an empty convention center into a 2,500-bed field hospital to alleviate the huge burden on the local hospitals,"



PFC. GENESIS MIRANDA

U.S. Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) G. Travis Clifton, Brooke Army Medical Center's chief of general surgery, stands in front of the Javits Convention Center in New York City, April 22, where he was deployed to ease the burden on local hospitals by aiding COVID-19 and other patients at the Javits.

Clifton explained.

The Javits Center, in conjunction with FEMA and the New York State Health Department, was initially intended to be a COVID-19-free, medical overflow facility. The team's first challenge was to create individual exam and hospital rooms in a cavernous space while familiarizing themselves with borrowed equipment.

"The situation was different than any I'd encountered," Clifton said. "I was familiar with a field hospital, doing deployment medicine and being adaptable to austere conditions. But setting up a convention center with a different mission than that type of unit is designed to do, one that involved treating American civilians, required a lot of adjustments."

Clifton's focus was on ensuring personnel understood how to recognize and treat the virus using the best available data at that time. "Even if we were planning to take only non-COVID-19 patients at first, we knew we would encounter COVID-19 cases among them based on the rapid spread

throughout the city," he said.

Once open for business, Clifton found himself in the unfamiliar position of having to stand by and wait for patients, COVID-19 or otherwise.

"The first day it was decided we would accept COVID-19 patients to increase our capacity, we took in far short of what we expected," he said, noting the New York State Health Department expanded the Javits' scope on April 3. "We realized there was some confusion regarding the established transfer criteria and decided to meet with hospital officials in person to help explain and facilitate the process."

Clifton and a few other physicians took on the role of liaison officers and immediately began visiting some of the hardest-hit city hospitals to explain the Javits' capabilities and to facilitate transfers.

Clifton chose to meet with officials at Elmhurst Hospital, part of the NYC Health and Hospitals System, in the borough of Queens, reviewing dozens of patient charts to see if they met the criteria for transfer.

Situated in an area

encompassing nearly 1 million people, the 545-bed hospital had been slammed with COVID-19 patients and was operating at 125 percent capacity. A spokesman for the city public hospital systems had noted Elmhurst was "at the center of this crisis."

"It was very much overwhelmed at Elmhurst," Clifton said. "There were way too many patients in the ER and no place to put them. Rather than rely on a call-center or website, I knew by going in person, we could help in a much more concrete way."

With Clifton's support and the hospital's cooperation, Elmhurst went from transferring 20 patients to about 60 in just a few days. Clifton's efforts were echoed at other busy city hospitals and the patient numbers at Javits began to increase. In just over a month, the Javits Center treated nearly 1,100 patients.

"I definitely feel we made an impact and were able to put our skills to good use," Clifton said. "The number of patients we treated is not a huge number compared to the total burden carried by New York. However,

it was 1,100 patients that were able to get attention, to lie comfortably in a patient room rather than in a hallway. To those patients, to those individuals, that number was not insignificant at all."

As New York began to recover, Clifton and the other military medical personnel transferred the last patients from Javits on May 1 and returned to their home units and families shortly after.

When Clifton first deployed, his wife said she felt some trepidation since the virus was such an unknown threat, but knew her husband would be drawn to a mission dedicated to caring for others. "We are all very proud of him and are happy to have him safe at home," she said, adding that she was also relieved to have the extra help with their sons' schoolwork.

With the global pandemic ongoing, Clifton is back at work at BAMC, but still coming to terms with the unusual nature of his recent military mission.

"It is a very extraordinary mission deploying in the U.S.," he said. "I've been to New York plenty of times, but being there during a lockdown with empty streets felt surreal. It was a different type of mission, but I am proud to have served my nation in this way alongside an outstanding team of adaptable and ready professionals."

The adaptability of Clifton and the other BAMC personnel is impressive, but not surprising, noted Air Force Col. Patrick Osborn, BAMC's deputy commander for surgical services. "The ability of Dr. Clifton and the rest of the BAMC staff to effectively care for patients outside their typical specialty and experience demonstrates the extraordinary readiness value that BAMC and its personnel provide to the nation," Osborn said. "The mindset borne of consistent trauma and complex surgical care reinforces the knowledge and skill required to provide care in any environment."

LACKLAND

Feasibility of secondary Air Force BMT location proven

COVID-19 surge operations underway

By Dan Hawkins

AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Air Force officials announced that, beginning June 2, the service will continue to hold basic military training at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, as a secondary location until the end of COVID-19 surge operations.

The decision to stand up BMT's initial operating capability at Keesler Air Force Base under Det. 5 of the 37th Training Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland comes after a successful proof of concept trial run at the base, which began April 7.

"This capability was a deliberately developed option to disperse the delivery of BMT during contingencies to provide surge capacity and introduce agility in the training pipeline construct," said Maj. Gen. Andrea Tullos, 2nd Air Force commander. "This move also helps ensure the health and safety of our trainees and instructors by allowing proper safety controls, like physical distancing and deep cleaning."

With the stand-up of initial operating capability, and every week until the need for surge operations diminishes, 60 new recruits from across the Total Force will arrive for six weeks of BMT here. The shortened requirement, down from eight and a half weeks, is due to the physical layout of the BMT area, the small number of recruits, and a surge schedule, which trains Airmen 10 hours



PHOTOS BY KEMBERLY GROUE

Basic military trainees under the 37th Training Wing, 737th Training Group Detachment 5 from Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, participate in weapons-firing training at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, May 6.

per day, six days a week, versus eight hours per day.

The move also provides relief to JBSA-Lackland's training infrastructure, Tullos said.

"Air Force BMT remains vital to renew the force and to the delivery of air and space power anytime, anywhere," she said. "Keesler's training mission is already set up with many of the facilities and procedures required to execute the mission."

Another reason Keesler was chosen for BMT was in the fact members of the 81st Training Wing and its detachments already conduct

more than 160 career field specialty training courses.

"Having trainees finish BMT and head across the base to begin technical training eliminates the need to transport trainees to another location after graduation," Tullos said. "Limiting movement effectively limits the number of times our Airmen could potentially be exposed to COVID-19."

Keesler BMT is a contingency option and is not designed to be implemented longer than 180 days, but it is designed to be sustainable for longer periods if required, Tullos said. She also said that there are no current plans to continue BMT at multiple locations following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keesler has historically hosted basic training for the War Department and the Air Force, beginning in 1941. Although that training tapered off after 1944, it carried on in some fashion until the 1960s.

Located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Keesler Air Force Base is home to the 81st TRW, 2nd Air Force, the U.S. Air Force Reserve's 403rd Wing, and is the single largest employer in the area.

With a mission to develop and inspire Airmen, members at Keesler train more than 28,000 students annually with an average daily student load of more than 2,700 at eight operating locations in the continental United States. The 81st TRW is a lead, joint training installation, and courses are provided for not only Air Force members, but representatives from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and civilian federal agencies.



U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, delivers the Oath of Enlistment during the basic military training graduation ceremony at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, May 15.

IAAFA adapts during COVID-19, continues international PME

By Rachel Kersey

37TH TRAINING WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In March 2020, when the nation started shelter-in-place orders due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Inter-American Air Forces Academy at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, which forges international friendship and security cooperations through education and training, coordinated for all of their international students to return to their home countries.

Despite relocations, IAAFA got back up and running with distance learning courses facilitated by videoconferencing software and thanks to that, IAAFA's Alpha Class of 2020 graduated May 15 via a virtual graduation ceremony.

"The current crisis gives IAAFA an opportunity to grow,



COURTESY PHOTO

IAAFA staff work with students across the Americas to teach professional military education to partner nation military student via distance learning.

develop new ways of teaching, and implement tools to enhance partner nations' interoperability with the United States well into the future," said Maj. Eduardo Barajas, Director of Operations

for the 837th Training Squadron and chief operations officer for IAAFA Distance Learning. "These efforts reassure our partners that IAAFA, despite the current pandemic crisis, is

open for business."

The cohort consists of 30 students in Mexico and Colombia and well as students from other nations throughout Central and South America.

"Colombia and Mexico are IAAFA's biggest customers and long-enduring partners," Barajas said. "IAAFA is able to teach students from these countries thanks to the Classroom of the Future and Distance Learning capabilities. COVID-19 didn't stop them from getting to graduate today."

Some of the courses taught were International Logistics, Basic Instructor Course, Cyber Security, and Cyber Network.

Students in this Alpha Cycle were able to participate in this virtual graduation from anywhere in the world May 15. Alpha Cycle was the beta test for the Bravo Cycle which will continue which takes place

from June 1 to Aug. 28 via distance learning.

What instructors experienced and learned while dealing with technological challenges during Alpha Cycle allowed the IAAFA team to establish best practices and prepare for how to make the 15 classes in Bravo Cycle's that much more successful.

But the IAAFA staff doesn't intend to stop there. Although COVID-19 was a surprise for all involved, the academy sees its adaptation as the beginning of a new era, inaugurating a long-term International distance learning capability.

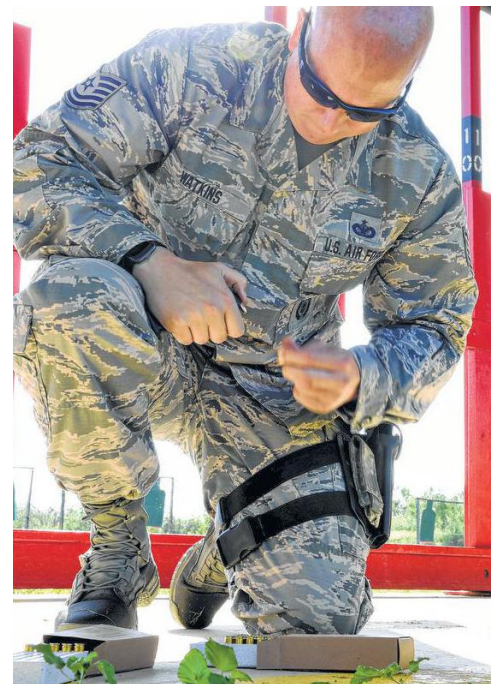
"By maintaining a strong partnership with our allies in Latin America, IAAFA's efforts to provide distance learning to partner nations will continue to make IAAFA the partner of choice for security cooperation programs," Barajas said.

149TH SFS GUNFIGHTERS CONDUCT WEAPONS QUALIFICATIONS

Tech Sgt. Charles Watkins (right), 149th Security Forces Squadron member, Air National Guard, waits for instruction during weapons qualification training at Joint Base San Antonio's Medina Annex May 27. Gunfighters assigned to the 149th Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron conducted weapons qualifications training May 27 on a firing range at

Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland's Chapman Training Annex.

Staff Sgt. Natalie Avey (below), 149th Security Forces Squadron member, Air National Guard, waits for instruction during weapons qualification training at a firing range at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland's Chapman Training Annex May 27.



PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. MINDY BLOEM

Virtual promotion ceremony celebrates achievements

By Rachel Kersey

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In the midst of advised social distancing, to minimize the spread of COVID-19, service members at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland continued with a



COURTESY PHOTO

Staff Sgt. Katelyn A. Shuttle speaks during a promotion ceremony April 30 in which three enlisted Airmen in the Cryptologic and Cyber Systems Division were promoted in a live-streamed ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland that drew an audience of colleagues and family members from across the nation.

time-honored tradition of holding a promotion ceremony. The catch? They did it virtually. Three enlisted Airmen were promoted April 30 in a live streamed ceremony that drew an audience of colleagues and family members from across the nation.

“Although we are living in very challenging and uncertain times, our Air Force remains strong,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Schmidt, program executive officer for Command, Control, Communications, Intelligence, and Networks at Hanscom Air Force Base, Massachusetts. “We are strong because of great men and women like those I have the honor of promoting.”

The three members who were promoted were Senior Master Sgt. Christopher Podobinski, Tech Sgt. John A. Pearson and Staff Sgt. Katelyn A. Shuttle. They are all part of the Cryptologic and Cyber Systems Division at JBSA-Lackland, under Schmidt’s directorate.

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a drastic challenge for the division to celebrate its promotees,” said 1st Lt. Enrique Garcia, executive officer of CCSD. “To help build morale and maintain our Air Force Heritage, Maj. Gen. Schmidt and Col. Alan Carreiro have teamed up to host the promotion virtually for the division.”

Podbinski has served the United States for more than 22 years at eight different bases. He has won many awards during his tenure in the Air Force, including Staff Sergeant of the Year. He now serves as the Signals Intelligence Maintenance section chief.

Pearson has been in the Air Force for eight years, building and maintaining unclassified and classified networks worldwide. He has earned the Gen. Edwin Rawling’s Award for Excellence in Information Technology Systems and works in the Space COMSEC branch.

Shuttle’s first duty station is JBSA-Lackland and in her short time in the Air Force, she has accomplished much. While in technical school at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Shuttle distinguished herself as a leader from the start. She was selected for promotion and earned the rank of staff sergeant on her first time testing. She is the production supervisor for the automatic cryogenic rectifier in the technical applications shop; working to repair and refurbish nuclear detection equipment, thus keeping Americans everywhere safe.

The ceremony was the first time Schmidt performed a virtual promotion.

“As a service, we have fought and lived through many adverse situations, and today is no different,” Schmidt said. “In spite of today’s unique and historical conditions, we fight on. We’ll honor these Airmen, their careers, and our Air Force traditions and heritage.”

Team votes in new AFIMSC tagline: ‘Your Success is Our Mission’

By Mike Briggs

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION SUPPORT CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

We asked and you answered! In response to Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center commander Maj. Gen. Tom Wilcox’s call for new tagline ideas April 12, members of AFIMSC submitted an impressive 156 proposals.

“We need a new tagline to replace ‘Warfighters Supporting Warfighters,’ which does not resonate with a great many of our teammates,” the commander wrote in his email to the team. “Think about what we do for the Air Force and Space Force and capture that with some ‘swagger’ in four or five words or less.”

Within a few hours, the Public Affairs workflow box had more than 70 submissions and that doubled over the course of the next day.

A tagline — call it a motto or slogan — is a short, but impactful statement that plainly communicates what an organization does and how it does it. It succinctly expresses the impact AFIMSC has on the installation and mission support it provides to customers.

The leadership team reviewed the submissions and each leader narrowed the field to his and her top 10. Each tagline received a point total based on how high each leader ranked it, and the top three then went to an AFIMSC-wide vote on April 27.

Those top three were: Our Mission is Your Success; One Team One Fight; and Your Mission Starts Here.

The team responded with 280 votes, and Our Mission is Your Success came out on top.

During the voting, several people indicated Our Mission is Your Success read better as Your Success is Our Mission. Leadership agreed, and the tagline was flipped. In addition to sounding better, the flip of the tagline also put the emphasis on the customer at the start of the slogan.

The tagline will now be used in place of Warfighters Supporting Warfighters in AFIMSC products, such as at the bottom of slides and other communication products developed for the internal team and external customers.

The tagline represents the reason for AFIMSC’s existence: the center was formed to centrally plan, build, maintain, improve and enhance the infrastructure and related support programs the Air Force — and now the Space Force too — has always relied on from the installation and mission support community to successfully execute the mission.

The AFIMSC team’s focus since Day 1 has been to deliver better capabilities to commanders and Airmen at 77 installations across the globe; to take on, integrate and process-improve the more than 150 functions that transferred to AFIMSC in October 2015 from MAJCOMs and Headquarters Air Force; and to develop an agile and networked team that provides global support anytime, anywhere at a moment’s notice.

The commander will address the tagline and other foundational items — “what we stand for” — like mission, vision, values and strategic priorities at his next commander’s call on May 21.

Reserve Citizen Airmen help transportation efforts amid coronavirus pandemic

By Tech. Sgt. Iram Carmona
433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Reserve Citizen Airmen with the 433rd Airlift Wing's Logistics Readiness Squadron were called to duty to assist with transportation efforts impacted by the current coronavirus pandemic in and around Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Master Sgt. Juan J. Guerra, 433rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, ground transportation section chief/quality assurance, has been filling in with scheduling, assigning personnel, and driving duties. These duties keep the base running, after Airmen and civilian employees, who are considered to be at high risk of contracting COVID-19, were asked to stay home.

Social distancing guidance requires additional vehicles to accommodate base transportation needs. Alamo Wing Reserve Citizen Airmen were activated to help operate these vehicles.

"I love the Air Force. So when the opportunity came to help out in the efforts here at home, I jumped right on it," Guerra said.

Staff Sgt. Aaron Antu, 433rd LRS, ground transportation operator, has been helping with transportation as well by shuttling personnel on and off base. The training squadrons on JBSA-Lackland are one of the factors that require utilizing more shuttles to transport fewer people in each bus, due to practicing proper social distancing.

"It's satisfying to know that when duty calls, I'm able to come out here and help out," Antu said.

Other Airmen assisting the mission are Tech. Sgt. Yolanda Reyes-Molina, 433rd LRS; Tech. Sgt. Roland Hairston and Staff Sgt. Michelle Grazier, 26th



PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. IRAM CARMONA

Staff Sgt. Aaron Antu, 433rd Logistics Readiness Squadron ground transportation operator, sanitizes a transportation vehicle being used to transport basic military training trainees who are being monitored for COVID-19 to and from medical facilities, May 21 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.



Staff Sgt. Aaron Antu, 433rd Logistics Readiness Squadron ground transportation operator answers a call for a vehicle to transport a COVID-19 monitored basic military training trainee, May 21 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

Aerial Port Squadron; and Master Sgt. William Bonner, 74th Aerial Port Squadron.

As of May 22, their combined efforts have accumulated 6,182 miles of driving, of which an estimated 800 miles was off base. So far, they have transported 1,351 passengers on and off base in 456 trips.

The Alamo Wing Airmen came in to help and alleviate the shortage of transportation drivers and operators for JBSA-Lackland. They took on the workload of about 26 individuals that were deemed to be at high-risk of contracting COVID-19. Their duties have been taking them all around the JBSA areas, to include on and off base.

"I love the Air Force. So when the opportunity came to help out in the efforts here at home, I jumped right on it."

Master Sgt. Juan J. Guerra,
433rd Logistics Readiness
Squadron, ground
transportation section chief

AFIMSC analytics tool expands to help leaders prioritize investments

By Joe Bela

AFIMSC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Enhancements to the Installation Health Assessment analytics platform are giving Air Force commanders the ability to accurately prioritize funding requirements for more critical mission support areas than ever before.

Developed and launched by the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in August 2018, the IHA was initially designed to forecast facility and infrastructure funding requirements for Air Force bases. By April 2019, it featured 12 dashboards that supported six projects.

Since that time, the cloud-based platform has grown exponentially. Today, with more than 150 dashboards, commanders have access to the holistic site picture they need to assess performance in areas that include:

► Airman and family services

- Base communications
- Deployment and distribution
- Combat support
- Command support
- Environmental quality
- Facility operations
- Facility sustainment and recapitalization
- Fire and emergency services
- Force protection and security
- Housing and dormitories
- From its inception, the IHA was designed with innovation in mind.

“Our long-term IT strategy called for automated processes that could efficiently collect, store and compute an immense amount of data from across the Air Force,” said Marc Vandever, AFIMSC’s Chief Innovation Officer.

AFIMSC partnered with the Air Force Chief Data Office and on April 8, 2019, the IHA cloud-based platform launched. The Air Force CDO stores the data, which can then be moved in and out of a large capacity platform called a data lake.

“The data lake is robust

enough to drill down and tell us the lifecycle and replacement cost of an air conditioning unit at any facility on a particular base,” Vandever said.

He added AFIMSC is currently addressing improvements to airfield management.

“We are jointly developing the Airfield Dashboard that displays all condition data for every runway, taxiway and parking apron across the Air Force,” Vandever said. “In addition to section-level details and maps, we have 10-year predictive degradation models that identify future requirements.”

“We’ve worked hard to make it a tool for all the bases to use,” said Patrick Kelly, chief of the Transportation Branch at the Air Force Civil Engineer Center operating location at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.

“Integrating the PAVR Sustainment Management System with the IHA platform improved our ability to

determine program requirements. Base pavement engineers can identify and project pavement repairs and then work with shops, base programmers and airfield managers to extend the life of their pavements.”

The capability enables engineers and airfield management to effectively build a maintenance plan, with associated costs, to show stakeholders and leadership. In this way, they can efficiently support repair efforts, he added.

With more enhancements on the horizon, the IHA will provide automated subscription-based updates that supply customized reports to wings, major commands and higher Air Force- and Space Force-level organizations. This will include a bundled set of reports tailored for each installation.

Commanders at every level can accurately determine the overall health of their

organizations, giving them the power to decide when and where to dedicate dollars.

“Predictive analytics help the Air Force plan for and spend dollars efficiently,” said Gen. Tim Ray, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command. “Today, we’re working closely with U.S. Space Force on an evolving service-wide data lake. The challenge now is to work with each of the wings, groups and squadrons to make sure the data is reliably organized and readily available.

“If I had one extra dollar to spend, I would spend it on building the best data lake and analytical tools that I could.”

Ultimately, these data-driven investment decisions optimize sustainment requirements and modernization efforts, while mitigating risk.

“As we evolve, the IHA will continue to provide the enhanced visibility leaders need to invest the next dollar into their most important mission capabilities,” Vandever said.

Air Force English language beta test advances despite COVID-19

From Defense Language Institute English Language Center

The 37th Training Wing began a beta test in March for an Air Force version of the Defense Language Institute English Language Center Army Echo Company program which has been in existence since 1975.

In partnership with Air Force Recruiting Service, this beta test is now in the execution phase. The goal is to show that an English language barrier is not a roadblock for eligible recruits interested in joining the United States Air Force. This is all credited to the unique language training capability DLIELC will provide them prior to the start of Basic Military Training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

On March 24, 10 Air Force trainees arrived at JBSA-Lackland eager to refine their English speaking skills and begin their journey as members of the first-ever Air Force Echo Flight.

Despite the beta test starting during the COVID-19 pandemic, DLIELC was able to safely navigate this groundbreaking initiative. Upon arrival, healthcare professionals monitored the trainees alongside their BMT counterparts during a 14-day restriction of movement, or ROM, period used to prevent the potential spread of the virus.

At the completion of ROM, trainees began English language training via distance learning at the 737th Training Support Squadron’s learning laboratory. Although not actually in the 7.5-week Basic Military Training pipeline, Military Training Instructors are providing assistance to prepare and acclimate them into BMT.

Initially, Echo Flight trainees took an English Comprehension Level, or ECL, exam to determine their skill level, which allowed DLIELC staff to tailor the learning environment and curriculum for optimal efficiency. Based on their ECL exam results, the DLIELC staff integrated the trainees into distance learning classrooms “alongside” their Army Echo Company teammates.

Echo Flight trainees recently took their second ECL exam to determine the increase in their English skills and to qualify for the transition to BMT. The trainees will next be taking a second Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test to determine if English comprehension changes correlate to ASVAB score changes. With improvement, these trainees may qualify for additional AFSCs, including critical needs such as linguists.

If adopted permanently, the Air Force Echo Flight program would provide an even more diverse group of U.S. citizens and permanent residents the



COURTESY PHOTO

Air Force Echo Flight trainees gather in the Commandant’s hallway and due to COVID-19 precautions, they are wearing facemasks as required.

opportunity to serve their country as Airmen in mission-critical areas. Assessing foreign-born native language speakers with desired skill-sets and backgrounds will introduce innovative and enriching perspectives never before available to the Air Force.

To learn more about the initiatives taking place at DLIELC, visit <https://www.facebook.com/DLIELCLACKLAND>.

JBSA facilities among those collecting 8,000 units of COVID-19 convalescent plasma

From Military Health System Communications Office

Two Joint Base San Antonio locations are among 15 Armed Services Blood Program centers looking to collect convalescent plasma from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 and may hold the treatment in their veins that could help others who are critically ill with the respiratory infection.

The Department of Defense has begun an effort to collect 8,000 donated units of plasma from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 to support the development of an effective treatment against the disease.

“We may want to ask you to stick your arm out and donate blood,” Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in a virtual town hall May 28. “What that can then do is help others who are severely ill, and if we can do that, then we’ll be on a good path toward getting some really powerful therapeutics.”

Donations will be accepted at 15 Armed Services Blood Program centers across the continental United States, and in Hawaii, Guam and Germany. (A complete list of centers accepting donations appears at the end of this article, and is available online.)

Patients fully recovered from COVID-19 are the only ones who qualify to be a COVID-19 convalescent plasma donor, said Army Col. Audra Taylor, chief of the Armed Services Blood Program. DOD personnel and their families, as well as non-DOD civilians with access to collection facilities on installations, are welcome to donate.

“Our goal as a lifesaving program is to always provide a safe and ample supply of blood products. The need is now,” Taylor said. “We are calling for all who are healthy, able and eligible, to donate today to help us all stand mission ready and save lives.”

Why Convalescent Plasma is Collected

When a person contracts SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, their immune system creates antibodies to fight the virus. These antibodies are found in the plasma, the liquid part of blood, Taylor explained.



TWANA ATKINSON

Donald Perry, a Fort Bragg civilian employee and recently recovered COVID-19 patient donates his plasma at the Fort Bragg Blood Donor Center at Fort Bragg, N.C., May 7.

Plasma with infection-fighting antibodies is called convalescent plasma, she said. Through the blood donation process, this plasma is collected from a donor who has recovered from COVID-19 and may be transfused into a sick patient who is still fighting the virus, if they qualify for this type of treatment. This may boost the immune system of the patient and help with the recovery process, Taylor said.

The collection process for this type of plasma is the same as standard apheresis collection, she noted. It is being investigated for the treatment of COVID-19 because there is no approved treatment for the disease at this time, and there is some indication that it might help some patients recover from COVID-19.

Several COVID-19 patients in the Military Health System have received convalescent plasma transfusions as part of their treatment, Taylor said. The treatment, which must be carried out under and approved protocol, is used for those hospitalized and severely ill with the disease.

Eligibility Requirements

Donating CCP is the same as a standard platelet or plasma donation and must meet specific requirements set by the Food and Drug Administration. Donors must be at least 17 years old,

weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in good health. Women who have ever been pregnant may need additional testing for specific human leukocyte antigen antibodies that may be present in their blood. In addition to these standard requirements, those who have fully recovered from COVID-19 must be symptom-free for at least 14 days. Donors must also produce documented laboratory test results proving they tested positive for the virus, Taylor explained.

“If a donor believes they meet these requirements, they must first contact the local blood donor center before coming in, and if they qualify, set up an appointment,” said Army Col. Jason Corley, Army Blood Program director, said. “Once set up, the donor must bring the required documentation and undergo the standard donation procedure. The final determination will be made by the medical director or designee.”

ASBP Centers Collecting Convalescent Plasma

- ▶ Armed Services Blood Bank Center, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland;
- ▶ Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Blood Donor Center, Portsmouth, Virginia;
- ▶ Fort Bragg Blood Donor Center, Fort

“Our goal as a lifesaving program is to always provide a safe and ample supply of blood products. The need is now.”

Army Col. Audra Taylor, chief of the Armed Services Blood Program

- Bragg, North Carolina;
- ▶ Kendrick Memorial Blood Center, Fort Gordon, Georgia;
- ▶ Sullivan Memorial Blood Center, Fort Benning, Georgia;
- ▶ Blood Donor Center, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi;
- ▶ Lackland Air Force Base Armed Services Blood Bank Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas;
- ▶ Robertson Blood Center, Fort Hood, Texas;
- ▶ Akeroyd Blood Donor Center, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, Texas;
- ▶ Fort Bliss Blood Donor Center, Fort Bliss, Texas;
- ▶ Naval Medical Center San Diego Blood Donor Center, San Diego, California;
- ▶ Armed Services Blood Bank Center — Pacific Northwest, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; Tripler AMC Blood Donor Center, Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii;
- ▶ Naval Hospital Blood Donor Center, Guam; and
- ▶ Armed Services Blood Bank Center Europe, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany

More Information

- ▶ Armed Services Blood Program COVID-19-specific page Blood Drive and Donor Registration
- Facebook: [militaryblood](#)
- Twitter: [@militaryblood](#)
- Instagram: [@usmilitaryblood](#)

RANDOLPH

AF delays mandatory wear-date for 2PFDU, OCP items

By Staff Sgt. Sahara L. Fales

AIR FORCE'S PERSONNEL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In an effort to reduce unnecessary stress on Airmen and Space professionals during COVID-19 restrictions, several uniform changes scheduled to become mandatory for the Operational Camouflage Pattern and Two-Piece Flight Duty Uniform on June 1, 2020, have been delayed to Sept. 1, 2020.

The changes for each uniform are detailed in Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Dress and Appearance of Air Force Personnel. Mandatory wear of the Operational Camouflage Pattern Uniform remains April 2021.

The changes that become mandatory in September for the OCP include:

► Officer rank insignia will be Spice Brown (exception:

First Lieutenant and Lieutenant Colonel rank insignia will be Black).

► The U.S. flag patch will be mandatory and the only authorized color is Spice Brown (cloth). Airmen will wear the flag while in garrison and deployed. Infrared U.S. flags are not authorized.

► The authorized T-shirt color will be Coyote Brown (listed as Tan 499 per AAFES nomenclature) only. If purchasing Coyote Brown shirts from outside retailers, uniformed members should ensure the color matches the authorized Coyote Brown color (Tan 499).

► The authorized socks will be DLA-issued Green socks or Coyote Brown only.

► The authorized boot color will be Coyote Brown only.

The two exceptions are for Airmen with a medical condition as determined by medical authorities at a civilian or military treatment facility and approved by

the commander, and those who must wear black combat boots in industrial areas.

The changes that become mandatory in September for the 2PFDU include:

► All mandatory wear badges must be in place.

► The cloth U.S. flag will be the Spice Brown color only.

► The authorized socks will be DLA-issued Green socks or Coyote Brown only.

► The authorized boot color will be Coyote Brown only.

► The only authorized color for thermal undergarments will be Coyote Brown.

For more information, please review Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Dress and Appearance of Air Force Personnel, or visit our website at <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Dress-and-Appearance/>.

Redefining 'normal' mental health care still means quality care

By Senior Master Sgt. Amanda Frampton

AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND
MENTAL HEALTH & DDR FUNCTIONAL MANAGER

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 that are being 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 in various different methods and providing Disaster Mental Health services when requested.

To maintain appropriate social distancing and to 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 utilization of a supported video-teleconference platform. This allows for patients to still receive care during COVID and reduces the risk of contracting the virus. The technicians are completing the assessments over the phone or video platform having a provider complete the safety assessment and determine future needs.

Along with most other career fields, the 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



STAFF SGT. CODY DOWELL

Herschel Walker (second from left), the anti-stigma campaign spokesman for the Patriot Support Program, greets a member of the 97th Air Mobility Wing Airman Leadership School at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma, Feb. 12.

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 to the latter, technicians continue educating trainees on how to recognize symptoms of depression and anxiety by teaching deep breathing and meditation techniques to help effectively manage stress.

► Many of our flights in AETC have put together newsletters and informational tips which leaders may distribute to their units on multiple avenues regarding how to curb boredom, managing stress and anxiety, remaining socially connected with 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 needs of 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 also assist in screening stations, interviewing patients for symptoms of COVID 19 and confirming use of the proper level of protection is taken prior to entering the facility or when additional testing is required.

It's a very difficult time right now and changes are rapidly occurring as soon as they are communicated; nevertheless, our Mental Health technicians are embracing changes while continuing to serve our populations with high-quality patient care in a safe environment.