

JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

JULY 17, 2020



Army Capt. Stacey Johnson (right), critical care nurse from Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force-627, provides positioning aids to a COVID-19 patient July 10 at a Baptist Hospital in San Antonio.

LUIS DEYA

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Spark Tank 2021 encourages ideas from Airmen

From AFWERX Public Affairs

Spark Tank, a collaboration between AFWERX and Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, Management, is now accepting submissions for the 2021 campaign from July 1 to October 16.

The annual campaign is designed to spur and empower innovative ideas from Airmen to further strengthen Air Force culture and capabilities.

“Empowerment breeds success,” said Lauren Knausenberger, Spark Tank director. “We know that if our Air Force leaders demonstrate their support, our Airmen’s desire to share their ideas and innovations would spread like wildfire across the Air Force.”

To kick off the campaign, Total Force Airmen are encouraged to submit their ideas on the Airmen Powered by Innovation crowdsourcing platform where teams from their major command will review them and select two semi-finalists, each to advance to a board run by Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Stephen W. Wilson. Two wildcard submissions will also be selected to progress to the board.

The selection process will look at the needs for specific capabilities as well as concerns of safety, policy, Air Force-wide implementation, technical feasibility and scalability.

Non-finalist submissions will be transferred to the API open-call campaign

and partnered with collaboration coaches to further develop their projects.

Following the board, six finalists will be selected to visit AFWERX Vegas for pitch coaching and innovation training before presenting on-stage at the Air Force Association Air Warfare Symposium in 2021.

“While we only select six finalists to progress to the Spark Tank final stage, we aim for all Airmen who participate in the campaign to gain something from the experience,” said Maj. Alisha Temples, Spark Tank deputy. “Whether it’s discovering a pathway to share their ideas, learning creative ways to solve problems at their unit, or hearing the secretary of the Air Force encourage them not to accept the status quo—this is an event meant for all Airmen.”

Building on last year’s event, which drew more than 200 idea submissions and named two winners, Spark Tank is also looking to expand and improve its program to include more educational opportunities and pathways for leaders to empower Airmen at all levels of the organization.

As part of this effort, the wing and major command with the most number of ideas submitted by the end of the campaign will be recognized for mobilizing their organization to contribute to the Air Force’s innovation mission.

By empowering Airmen to submit as

many ideas as possible, the Air Force can begin to understand trends, identify pain points and challenge areas, and start connecting teams that may have similar interests and could benefit from combining efforts.

“Shifting a decades-in-the-making bureaucratic culture toward an agile and responsive problem-solving, improvement and innovation-focused culture will not happen overnight,” said William “Brou” Gautier, Air Force Continuous Process Improvement & Innovation Division chief. “While we’ve made great strides over the last few years with Spark Tank and Airmen Powered by Innovation efforts, we still have a long way to go. It will take active participation from our top leadership and every Airmen and Space professional to get us there.”

As part of this year’s campaign, AFWERX and SAF/MG will also be sharing educational material on how organizations can move beyond potential roadblocks and innovate, pulled from resources like the Innovation Handbook and the Four Phases of Innovation, as well as highlighting the experiences of previous Spark Tank participants.

To get started, visit the API crowdsourcing platform at <https://usaf.ideascale.gov.com/a/ideas/recent/campaigns/156> to submit and share ideas, provide thoughts and feedback on submissions, and vote on the most promising solutions.

Federal survey helps civilians voice their opinions

From Secretary of the Air Force staff report

The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, or FEVS, will be available for Air Force civilian employees starting July 15.

The FEVS is a government-wide, Office of Personnel Management administered annual survey that Air Force civilian employees have been participating in since 2006.

The approximately 100-question survey takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete and is anonymous. The survey includes questions about employees’ work-life, job and organizational satisfaction,

commitment, engagement, performance management and communication. It measures employee perceptions of whether their organization is successful.

Permanent, non-seasonal full and part-time civilian employees onboard as of October 2019 are eligible to participate and will receive a link for the survey via an email from OPM. The survey invitation and OPM reminder emails will come from ‘EVAF@OPM.gov’ between 15 July and 26 August.

In an effort to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the federal workforce, this year’s survey will be a census including

questions designed to gather information about how employees have worked together, used tools, received communications, maintained health and safety, employed work/life flexibilities, and more.

“Feedback through the FEVS provides insight into what our civilian Airmen think we’re doing right and where we need to improve,” said Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, Manpower, Personnel and Services, deputy chief of staff. “The more people participate, the better sense we get for how to improve ourselves, our organizations and our department.”

Kelly highlighted three objectives for this year’s

upcoming Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey:

- ▶ Increase survey participation
- ▶ Increase communication and feedback between leaders and employees on their concerns
- ▶ Understand the Air Force in comparison to other Departments within the Federal Government

“The 2020 FEVS provides an opportunity to further strengthen communications and understanding between Air Force leadership and our civilian employees,” Kelly said. “We are eager to hear what our civilian Airmen have to say.”

For more information about the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, visit <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/>.

JBSA LEGACY

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Feedback Fridays

By Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller

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

Q. What is Spark Tank?

A. The Spark Tank 2021 idea-generation is an annual campaign that gives members of the U.S. Air Force and US. Space Force (enlisted, officer, Reserve, Guard, and civilian employees) the opportunity to submit innovative ideas to tackle the Air and Space Forces' toughest challenges.

The event is designed to encourage intrapreneurship, retain innovators, and speed adoption of emerging technologies — especially those developed by Airmen that impact their largest challenges.

Selected finalists may have the opportunity to pitch innovative ideas to top Air Force leadership and a panel of industry experts. Hosted each year at the Air Force Association's Warfare Symposium, attendees watch as Air Force leaders encourage Airmen to disrupt the status quo. Spark Tank campaign opened in the API platform on July 1, 2020 and will close Oct. 16, 2020.

For more information and to apply, visit <https://www.afwerx.af.mil/spark-tank.html>.

Q. While I suspected the pharmacy would be closed July 3, as well as July 6, I called first to hear their automated system tell me they were open as normal. There was no mention of a training day.

Just to be sure, I went through the entire JBSA and JBSA-Randolph specific portions of their websites to ascertain if there were any announcements of a training day. There were none. The closest was information to see an Air Education and Training Command website for a



COURTESY GRAPHIC

listing of all training days which I did and it said the only training day was July 6. So I drove out there and guess what?

My question is why? I realize the pharmacy would like to catch up with most of the rest of the base which has been on a training day since early March, but why can't they make it known without having to drive out to the base to find out?

A. Thank you for taking the time to write in and we apologize for the inconvenience. We are committed to providing exemplary patient-centered healthcare to our beneficiaries.

This feedback has been passed along to the pharmacy leadership and will ensure the automated messages and our website are updated for future family/training days.

For the most up-to-date information, please like and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/59mdw> and <https://www.facebook.com/BrookeArmyMedicalCenter>.

Q. My wife and I were out on the golf course on Friday, July 3, and at 4:30 p.m., the national anthem played. I noticed a Security Force patrol car on the flight line adjacent to the golf course did not stop and render

respect to the national anthem but continued to drive.

A. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Typically individuals should stop driving and render the proper customs and courtesies when the national anthem is being played on Installation in accordance with Air Force Manual 36-2203, paragraph 7.37.2.5. Security Forces however, are in a unique position as they are expected to still respond to calls for assistance or distress, even during moments of observance such as when the national anthem is played.

Q. Can you please allow retirees to access the JBSA gyms?

A. Thank you for your honest feedback and years of dedicated military service.

Our retirees, dependents and Department of Defense civilians are the backbone to our JBSA community and have earned all the rights to the benefits that come with serving our great country, but during this unprecedented time increased protection measures have been implemented to protect our active duty, Reservists, and Guardsmen to maintain mission readiness.

On June 26, JBSA transitioned back to HPCON Charlie to better posture the installation and help reduce community

spread of COVID-19. This action was necessary to continue to protect the health of our people and the vital DOD missions we conduct.

JBSA is presently only open to Mission Essential and Mission Critical personnel. Only military members, civilian employees and other DOD-affiliated personnel (to include retirees, dependents, contractors) who are conducting official business or have appointments at a military medical treatment facility will be allowed on the installation.

Reduced installation access is the same as previous HPCON Charlie procedures. Key highlights of services that were modified include fitness centers, which will remain open to active duty, Reserve and Guard personnel only. This not only allows our military population to remain mission ready but also helps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in an area that is of higher transmission risk.

This decision was made based on data regarding transmission likelihood and with the consultation of public health experts. We continue to monitor the COVID environment and adjust our services as necessary for the health and wellness of the entire JBSA population.

Thank you for your support and understanding during these challenging times.

FORT SAM HOUSTON

ARNORTH to oversee military COVID-19 operations in Texas, California

U.S. Army North Public Affairs

At the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and state officials, approximately 740 Department of Defense medical and support professionals from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force are assigned as part of the DOD's ongoing COVID-19 operations in Texas and California. As part of the whole-of-America response, U.S. Army North, U.S. Northern Command's Joint Forces Land Component Command, will oversee the military operation in support of federal efforts and the state.

"We are committed to assisting those in need as part of the ongoing whole-of-America response to COVID-19," said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, U.S. Army North commander. "At the same time, we remain flexible and capable of providing other defense support to civil authorities as necessary."

In Texas, U.S. Northern Command assigned approximately 580 military medical and support personnel from the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy to support FEMA and the state.

The first of the 580, an 85-member enhanced Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force, from the 627th Hospital Center, Fort Carson, Colorado, arrived July 6.

On July 10, Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced a second 85-member U.S. Army



PHOTOS BYT LUIS DEYA

Soldiers from the Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force-627 begin supporting Methodist Hospital medical staff in San Antonio July 9.

UAMTF, which began to arrive in Texas today, would go to Houston.

"Texas is grateful to the U.S. Department of Defense for providing these additional resources to Houston and San Antonio as we work to slow the spread of COVID-19 and care for our fellow Texans," said Governor Abbott. "We will continue to work with our local and federal partners to help ensure that all medical needs are met in Houston, San Antonio, and throughout the state."

An additional four, 85-person U.S. Army UAMTFs, along with a 44-person Acute Care Team and four, seven-person Rapid Rural Response Teams from

the U.S. Navy, were also activated at the behest of Texas to support statewide efforts.

The first UAMTF to arrive, designated UAMTF 627, began treating patients at five San Antonio hospitals, July 9.

"It's an honor to be in San Antonio, Texas, providing care to patients alongside local hospital staff," said U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Kopaciewicz, a UAMTF 627 critical care nurse embedded with Christus Westover Hills Medical Center. "I was doing similar work, treating COVID-19 positive patients, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State before being employed here."

In addition to Christus Westover Hills Medical Center, critical care nurses, emergency room nurses, medical surgical nurses, and respiratory specialists from UAMTF 627 are serving at Baptist Health Center, Christus Santa Rosa Medical Center, Methodist Metropolitan and University Hospital.

UAMTF 627, is comprised of Soldiers from Colorado and elsewhere, including Brooke Army Medical Center.

"Our Soldiers train daily to maintain clinical skills so we can save and sustain lives wherever and whenever the nation calls," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jason Hughes, UAMTF 627 commander.

In California, U.S. Northern Command assigned approximately 160 military medical and support personnel from the U.S. Air Force to support FEMA and the state.



From left: Army critical care nurses 1st Lt. Charles Gilchrist; 1st Lt. Lauryn Hudgins and 1st Lt. Colton Whitehouse from Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force-627, work to provide medical care to a COVID-19 patient alongside Baptist Hospital medical staff in San Antonio July 10.

JBSA members express views on diversity

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Service members shared their personal experiences on topics including race, gender, and equality in the military, and what can be done to improve opportunities for everyone serving in the uniform, during a diversity forum at the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Military and Family Readiness Center July 1.

Brig. Gen Caroline Miller, 502d Air Base Wing and JBSA commander, led a round-table discussion that included a diverse group of 13 active-duty members and a Department of Defense civilian employee. For safety reasons, forum attendees were spread out in a circle practicing social distancing while also wearing masks.

Miller started the discussion by asking the attendees if they had taken a Department of Defense survey sent to service members on diversity and inclusion, which included questions on racial disparities and discrimination in the workplace.

Some attendees raised their hands indicating they had taken it. For those who hadn't, Miller encouraged them to participate in the survey.

"It has to do with the culture of our organization," Miller said. "There are a lot of questions in there about what you have personally experienced, what you have seen, disparities among whatever groups of people. It's a good survey."

"So, I would ask you, if you do have it, to take it," Miller said. "Be honest with it so we can figure out what's going on."

Erick Vazquez, 502nd Communications Squadron Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act manager, said in his 22 years serving in the Navy and as a DOD civilian employee, he has experienced and witnessed racial discrimination and bias from



JOSE A. TORRES JR.

Brig. Gen Caroline Miller (left), 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, listens to a service member at a diversity forum round-table discussion at the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Military and Family Readiness Center July 1.

supervisors regarding who they promote and hire in the workplace.

Vazquez, who is from Puerto Rico, said he experienced racism while in the Navy when a master chief called him a racial slur.

"I was just blown away because I didn't know what the word meant until later," he said.

Vazquez said accountability is needed if things are to improve in both the military and civilian work environment. He told of an incident when a worker he supervised, who was a good employee who did his job, was accused of racial bias.

"But he made a mistake, and come to find out, he was a racist," Vazquez said. "We did an investigation, and he was found guilty. He was gone. I held him accountable."

Vazquez said he hopes people don't continue to turn a blind eye to the problems that may come up in the workplace.

"We've just got to get to the

root cause," he said. "See something, say something. We've got to hold people accountable."

Capt. Dayna Cheek, 502nd Security Forces Group Judge Advocate General at the JBSA-Randolph Base Legal Office, said if opportunities are to improve for everyone in the military, the top of the command chain needs to get involved, be more inclusive, and gain the trust of all service members in their units and organizations.

"It starts with leadership," Cheek said.

Cheek said members of leadership who are responsive to the concerns of their unit members can help to bring about positive change within their organization.

"I've been in (the Air Force) two years, but I've seen the culture change," she said. "I've seen the culture change where leadership is inclusive of everyone; I've seen how productive the work climate

can be."

Cheek said for positive change to come about in the military, both service members and leaders need to work together to address the problems and challenges that will come up.

"This is something we all have to change," she said. "The same things that my grandpa was fighting for, my dad was fighting for, and now I'm fighting for. I see it as something of a lifelong goal to make a change and encourage people to see it that way."

Chief Master Sgt. Wendell Snider, 502d ABW and JBSA command chief, said as a black man he has noticed the difference in how he is treated when he is in uniform versus when he is not wearing the uniform.

"The uniform is a powerful thing," Snider said. "When I go out, people thank you for your service. It's great. But I've always noticed what it feels like to go out as a black man,

"I've been in (the Air Force) two years, but I've seen the culture change. I've seen the culture change where leadership is inclusive of everyone; I've seen how productive the work climate can be."

**Capt. Dayna Cheek,
502nd Security Forces Group
Judge Advocate General at
JBSA-Randolph Base Legal
Office**

without the uniform, and the fact that people still follow me in the store."

Snider said when he has dealt with challenging situations during his military career, he knew he could rely on the support of his fellow service members.

"I need support from my Airmen because I'm serving my country in a place that I probably wouldn't be unless I was serving in the military," he said. "So, I'm really depending on my military family to hold me up because I have other pressures that I have to deal with."

In her concluding remarks, Miller thanked everyone who attended and shared their personal experiences.

"No one has been in anybody else's shoes except for their own," Miller said. "We will continue to have the conversations and make it better. My whole job here is to make sure that you have the tools and have the environment in which to succeed, in which to feel included, and in which you feel you are making a contribution because that's what it's all about."

BAMC 'agilely adapts' to support community

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brooke Army Medical Center is continuing to aid the San Antonio community in the midst of a COVID-19 surge across the region.

"Over the past few months, BAMC and the San Antonio Military Health System as a whole have agilely adapted to continue to provide service to our 250,000 active duty and military beneficiaries in a COVID-19 environment while sustaining our Level I trauma support of our region," said BAMC Commanding General Army Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby.

From easing the city's testing demand to taking on additional critically ill patients, BAMC's response to this ongoing crisis has been "nothing short of amazing," Bagby noted.

Lifesaving trauma care

BAMC is the only Level I Trauma Center within the Department of Defense and one of two within San Antonio. Alongside University Health System, BAMC administers lifesaving care to more than 4,500 trauma patients each year, including 750 burn patients, from an area that stretches across 22 counties in Southwest Texas and encompasses 2.2 million people.

Of the over 4,500 trauma patients admitted each year, about 85 percent are community members without military affiliation. The Secretary of the Army Designee, or SECDES, program enables BAMC to receive civilian trauma patients in a military treatment facility. Traumas range from gunshot wounds and stabbings to vehicle accidents and severe burns.

"Our close partnership with Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC), University Health System (UHS) and the other local healthcare systems allows BAMC to seamlessly integrate

into community crisis responses," said Air Force Col. Patrick Osborn, deputy commander for surgical services. "In essence, it allows us to train as a system within a system.

"We are training to receive patients with the most severe injuries in a way that is very translatable to our combat casualty care role. Being a leader in a very mature trauma system sets the trauma mindset for our entire organization," he said.

Working alongside STRAC, which coordinates the region's trauma and disaster relief response, and UHS, BAMC is fully integrated within the local trauma network, Osborn said.

This has been evident in recent days. With local hospitals nearing capacity, BAMC has been taking additional trauma patients through STRAC to ensure the region's trauma response remains unaffected by the pandemic.

Additionally, BAMC is increasing its ability to care for the area's most critically ill COVID-19 patients, to include beneficiaries, veterans and civilian patients, through the expanded use of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, or ECMO, treatment, Osborn noted.

ECMO is a heart-lung bypass system that circulates blood through an external artificial lung, oxygenates it, and delivers it back into the bloodstream. Rather than treat the condition, ECMO performs the job of the patient's heart and lungs, buying the patient precious time to respond to treatments and heal.

Established in October 2012, BAMC has the only adult ECMO center with full capability in the Department of Defense and remains one of the few centers in the world with air transport capability. Requiring a highly specialized team and equipment, BAMC is



JASON W. EDWARDS

Bernadette Thompson (left), chief of Infection Prevention and Control Services, assists Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Elizabeth Markelz (right), Infection Prevention and Control Services medical director, in donning personal protective equipment before entering a patient room at Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston April 9.

one of a few hospitals within the city with this capability, and as with trauma, accepts civilian patients through the SECDES program.

"As much as able, BAMC is easing the burden on local healthcare resources by admitting civilian ECMO patients and seeking out military beneficiaries that can be transferred from community hospitals," Osborn said.

"Functioning as a trauma center for the region each day, coupled with the deployment experience of many, BAMC remains ready to respond to any contingency," he continued. "We will continue to collaborate with the local healthcare systems to coordinate the region's response to COVID-19 and are honored to provide safe, quality care to all of our patients."

Hidden healthcare heroes

BAMC also provides community support through its drive-thru screening and testing operation. Operational

since the earliest days of the COVID response, BAMC has eased the burden on the city's overtaxed testing sites, screening more than 9,100 patients and testing more than 7,500 personnel as of July 7. Additional screening and testing are provided by the 59th Medical Wing on Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland and JBSA-Randolph.

"By providing on-site testing for our beneficiaries, we eliminate the need for them to seek alternative testing locations furnished by state and local health officials," said Army Col. Betsy Stanley, who oversees the operation. "We also have testing conveniently located on campus with results within 24 hours."

The operation started out in an adjacent hospital parking lot but soon moved to the first floor of the parking garage to prevent heat and weather exposure for the screeners. The operation has grown from about 25 to 60 personnel.

"Our screening and testing operation is vital to our mission

here at BAMC," said Air Force Col. Richard Palmer, deputy commander for health readiness. "By providing this service, we've kept thousands of potentially infected patients out of the hospital, minimizing the spread of the virus to other healthcare workers and enabling the BAMC team to continue to see other patients."

For testing, BAMC uses the CDC-recommended COVID-19 test called a nasopharyngeal swab, which involves using a swab to take a sample from inside the nose. The samples are sent to the BAMC Department of Pathology to process.

Testing by the thousands

Upon receipt of the swabs, lab technicians begin the intensive work of processing tests. Based on demand, technicians from the Department of Pathology and Area Laboratory Services, or DPALS, run tests for up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As of July 7, BAMC has processed more than 25,000 COVID-19 tests.

"Our technicians have been amazing and, fortunately, this has been a team effort from the start," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Robert Cybulski, Jr., director, microbiology, DPALS, noting collaborative efforts with the BAMC screening and testing operation, Infectious Disease Service and Preventive Medicine.

Additionally, technicians from Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center and the Department of Defense Food Analysis and Diagnostics Laboratory have volunteered their time and resources to assist the ongoing COVID-19 mission at BAMC, he added.

"Their support ensures we can support the COVID-19 mission as well as our routine laboratory mission for our patients," Cybulski said.

Each day, the total list of

BAMC ADAPTS continues on 8

BAMC ADAPTS

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positives generated during a 24-hour period is sent to Infectious Disease, Public Health personnel on Joint Base San Antonio, and select physicians within BAMC Family Medicine to ensure patient follow-up is completed and documented appropriately, and to facilitate additional reporting to community Public Health officials.

“The laboratory has not only shown amazing resiliency as it has adapted to the evolutionary changes that have come from the CDC, DoD, and other agencies regarding the understanding of COVID-19, but the staff has shown a level of teamwork and camaraderie that I’ve only experienced under the most high-stress environments,” said Army Master Sgt. Jeffrey Thomas, DPALS noncommissioned officer in charge.

Pharmacy reduces footprint

The Pharmacy Department has also stepped to the forefront to assist COVID response efforts. To ensure staff and patient safety and reduce the footprint within the hospital, BAMC implemented a curbside pharmacy service across the organization starting in late March.

Over the course of just over two months, BAMC serviced more than 89,500 vehicles and dispensed over 162,000 prescriptions. Since June 1, BAMC has processed more than 97,500 prescriptions through its drop-off and pick-up in-house services.

“Due to the COVID crisis, the BAMC Pharmacy team quickly came together on very short notice and successfully made the new curbside pharmacy service a reality in less than 48 hours,” said Army Col. Stacey Causey, chief, Department of Pharmacy. “The process has been a big success for the pharmacy and organization.”

While the curbside service

was well received by customers, BAMC is working to ensure the utmost convenience and safety with its in-house prescription drop-off and pick-up service, eliminating waiting times and waiting area crowds.

“My team stepped up to do what was needed to ensure the safety of our patients,” Causey said. “I am incredibly proud of their efforts.”

Dialing in to healthcare

BAMC also has been leveraging every virtual asset to its fullest extent in recent months in an effort to keep patients safe at home.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Virtual Medical Center at BAMC increased virtual health appointments from 16 percent of overall appointments in January 2020 to 52 percent in May 2020, said Army Lt. Col. Sean Hipp, director of the Virtual Medical Center, noting that Primary Care and Behavioral Health have been active users of virtual services.

Virtual appointments can be used for medication refill requests, lab and radiology results, cold and allergy symptoms, urinary tract infections and routine follow-up appointments in which a physical exam isn’t required.

The Virtual Medical Center is also exploring the expansion of tele-critical care support, or TCC, Hipp said. This involves a network of providers and other specialists monitoring smaller wards, providing overwatch and support for patients in intensive care units. With COVID-19, there’s a feasible tele-critical application at BAMC, he noted.

“We are looking into the possibility of installing cameras and central monitoring equipment for wards in which COVID patients are being cared for,” Hipp said. “Critical care providers are a finite resource and having this capability would enable them to provide invaluable care to a greater number of patients.

“TCC would expand staff

capability and will reduce PPE use and the medical staff’s exposure risk,” he added.

Hipp is hoping the current virtual trend will lead to lasting benefits.

“On the readiness side, we already have a robust readiness clinic and the ability to see patients all over the world rapidly. Now, we are gaining a better understanding of what can be done over the phone or on video, which will lead to better access to care throughout the San Antonio Military Health System,” he said.

“BAMC will continue to assess and explore ways to support our beneficiaries and community during this ongoing national emergency,” the commanding general said.

“We are honored to serve our active duty, retirees, their family members and this tremendous community,” he said, “and we are proud to serve our nation as a premier readiness platform for our military medical personnel.”

Trauma readiness training receives rave reviews

By Lori Newman

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The new Strategic Trauma Readiness Center of San Antonio, or STaRC, completed its first trauma readiness training for the 555th Forward Surgical Team June 6.

The intense three-week program consisted of a combination of didactic and hands-on trauma events designed to test individual skills and team performance.

“We have all of the resources in one place to do everything that a deploying trauma team needs before they deploy,” said Army Col. (Dr.) Tyson Becker, Brooke Army Medical Center STaRC director.

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 Department of Defense Trauma Registry caseload and performance data and provides realistic training in an austere environment at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis. Additionally, the program can also be adapted to meet the needs of a variety of surgical teams.

“We stretched the 555th FST during the training and pushed them to their limit, so when they deploy downrange, they are ready to handle any challenge they encounter,” Becker said. “Our comprehensive program included multiple opportunities for hands-on care and in the end, the team performed thousands of individual skills they need while deployed. The team had opportunities in the field as well as in a Level 1 Trauma Center.”

The program leverages 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.

“In order to maximize the buy-in and the training opportunity these Soldiers have prior to deploying, we employ several different modalities to include mannequins, live Soldier role players, and high fidelity devices such as our surgical cut suits,” explained Russell Moore, MEDCoE program manager.

“It's very important that we present these teams with as realistic of a training scenario as possible, to encourage them to give everything they have and to test their skills in a realistic manner so the subject matter experts who are involved can also evaluate them accurately,” Moore said.

The 555th FST also received training on how to treat military working dogs in the field because there is a limited number of veterinarians downrange.

“We really rely on them to treat military working dogs that are injured, because we might not always be in the right location at the right time to help those dogs,” said Army Maj. Hailey Harroun-White, MEDCoE division of veterinary science instructor.

Overall, the feedback from this inaugural training was very positive.



JASON W. EDWARDS

“This training was well put together, very organized and very comprehensive,” said Army Maj. Ishmael Flecha, a physician assistant and 555th FST commander. “We were put through a lot of stressful situations and we were able to work through those situations. Our team dynamic improved a lot. We definitely feel we are ready to go downrange and do our job.”

Army Sgt. Colleen Mims, a licensed practical nurse and 555th FST Intensive Care Unit noncommissioned officer in charge, said the benefits of the training were endless.

“I would definitely recommend this training before deployment,” Mims said. “I think it gave us a good idea of how we work together as a team, our unit cohesion and what to expect in those field scenarios.”

Army Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Fahie, 555th FST detachment sergeant, said he was impressed with the caliber of the instructors for the course.

“The minds that they pulled together for this event is outstanding and amazing,” Fahie said. “The depth of their research and their experiences that they are able to give to our team to prepare us to conduct our operations was invaluable.”

“San Antonio is the best place for a trauma readiness program such as STaRC because of the large number of trauma experts we have in one geographic location,” Becker said.

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 Antonio, or STaRC, at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis May 26.

Staff members at JBSA museums keep busy

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In normal circumstances, George Wunderlich would be greeting and meeting a constant stream of visitors, service members and dignitaries daily at the U.S. Army Medical Department Museum at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

Wunderlich, AMEDD Museum director, now walks through mostly quiet and empty hallways at the museum, the result of having to close its doors to the public for the time being because of the coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic.

"Usually, we are here greeting members of the public and Soldiers for events," Wunderlich said. "We almost have 20,000 people a year coming here, just for ceremonies and events. It's just strange; it has never been so quiet."

Historians and staff members at museums throughout JBSA have had to adjust since shutting their doors to visitors in March because of the pandemic.

Since JBSA is at Health Protection Condition Charlie, or HPCON C, the doors of those museums, including the AMEDD Museum, the Fort Sam Houston Museum and the Airman Heritage Museum at JBSA-Lackland, will be closed to the public for the foreseeable future.

Even though JBSA museums are not accepting visitors for the time being, historians and staff members at those museums are keeping themselves busy with plenty of projects to do.

Wunderlich said he is the only AMEDD Museum staff member working at the museum daily. He said he needs to be at the museum so maintenance personnel from the 502nd Civil Engineering Squadron can continue to conduct inspections of air

conditioning units, conduct updates of various systems within the building, and do maintenance checkups.

The remaining AMEDD Museum staff members are teleworking, conducting paperwork, or performing research on topics for museum exhibits and interpretative displays. They have also been able to conduct an inventory of museum artifacts as required by the U.S. Army Center for Military History, which oversees Army museums across the country.

The AMEDD Museum, which is part of the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, has opened its doors for a few exceptions, such as limited training for MEDCoE service members and a special event in late June for the assumption of command of U.S. Army Medical Command by the Surgeon General of the Army.

Wunderlich said training has been limited to groups of 10 or less and that events at the museum have been limited to groups of 50 or less. When the museum has had training or hosted a special event, social distancing and safety guidelines have been followed, including the requirement that people wear a mask.

Jacqueline Davis, Fort Sam Houston Museum director, said she has been working on organizing the museum's inventory and archives during the museum's closure.

With the work that has been done on the museum's inventory, Davis said most of it is in good and stable condition.

"This is the first 100 percent inventory we have done in a long time," Davis said. "I feel more confident about our inventory now."

While Davis has kept herself busy at the museum, Fort Sam Houston Museum curator, Dr. Bryan Howard, has been working from home updating the museum's internal online records system



DAVID DEKUNDER

Jacqueline Davis, Fort Sam Houston Museum director, holds an insignia worn by U.S. Army Medical Department hospital stewards in the late 1880s in one of the museum's storage rooms in 2017.

to follow guidelines set by the U.S. Army Center for Military History.

Davis said updating and organizing the Fort Sam Houston Museum online records will allow other Army museums to easily identify artifacts in the Fort Sam Houston Museum collection. In turn, the Fort Sam Houston Museum will be able to easily review other Army museums' collections, which could allow for the borrowing of artifacts and materials.

While teleworking, Howard has been able to update and work on some museum exhibit graphics. Once the graphics are completed, he has been

able to send them to the museum's shared drive where Davis accesses and prints them and places them on the exhibits.

While the museum has not been able to host special events, Davis said they are permitted to allow service members from U.S. Army North to come by for specific training purposes in which social distancing guidelines are followed. The museum primarily supports U.S. Army North.

At the Airman Heritage Museum, which is part of the Airman Heritage Training Complex at JBSA-Lackland, work on exhibit projects have

been conducted despite their closure.

Bill Manchester, Airman Heritage Training Complex director, said the museum has been able to make progress on several projects and conduct an inventory because all six of the staff members from the Airman Heritage Training Complex, which includes the U.S. Air Force Security Forces Exhibit Annex Museum and a museum warehouse on the JBSA-Chapman Training Annex, have been able to work from the complex by following social distancing guidelines and spreading out in their work areas.

Progress on exhibit projects includes the rebuilding of the Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training, or BEAST, exhibit, and the completion of two new exhibits, "The Women in the Air Force" gallery and "Friend or Foe," an interactive exhibit.

Also, museum staff members have done research on two projects, one on static aircraft within the Southeast Asia Air Park, which has been moved to a new location at JBSA-Lackland, and another for two new historical display cases, which were built by staff members, at the Air Education Training Command Headquarters at JBSA-Randolph.

The Airman Heritage Museum has been open during the pandemic to basic military training flights to provide additional training in history and heritage to trainees.

Because the museum can't open to the public, Manchester said he misses interacting with the visitors who come to the museum, including the family members of trainees, military retirees and veterans.

"We're a big recruiting tool with the ability to interact with the public and talk to a young Airman's family," Manchester said. "We got to instill our Air Force history into them. I miss that."

LACKLAND

Military Training Instructor Schoolhouse memorializes Air Force history

By Rachel Kersey

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ten Military Training Instructors from the 37th Training Wing donned legacy Air Force uniforms, dating from 1947 to the present, as they posed for a photographer at the Airman Heritage Museum on Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland June 24 to help create a new mural to decorate the walls of the Military Training Instructor Schoolhouse.

"We're doing a timepiece from the start of the Air Force up until right now," said Senior Master Sgt. Paul Watts, commandant of the MTI schoolhouse. "A lot of the MTIs don't know this history. This way, we could show them, in a visual, where we started out as an MTI corps and where we've gone along the way."

This Living History project is more than three months in the making, Watts said. It all started when his boss, Chief Master Sgt. Leary Gaitan, the BMT superintendent, came up to him and asked why the MTI schoolhouse didn't have a mural.

They began looking at other squadrons and how they displayed their history. Then, they assembled a team of MTIs to model the uniforms, scheduled a photographer, and brought in the historians at the Airman Heritage Museum, along with retired Lt. Col. David Shultz, the education and outreach program manager for the Airman Heritage Foundation, which donated the



COURTESY GRAPHIC

Ten Military Training Instructors from the 37th Training Wing in legacy Air Force uniforms dating from 1947 to the present, gather for a photographer at the Airman Heritage Museum on Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland June 24 to create a new mural for the Military Training Instructor Schoolhouse.

uniforms.

Shultz was more than happy to assist them on this project, as one of the Airman Heritage Foundation's key missions is to educate current and future Airmen and the general public about the U.S. Air Force and the role enlisted Airmen have played in its success.

"We've got literally hundreds of Air Force uniforms. With that collection — since the museum can't loan anything out — we can support things like air shows, Air Force balls, all sorts of events for an entire region of this country," Shultz said. "We go to Colorado, we go to Mississippi; we go all over the place to support Air Force functions."

Fernando Cortez, the Airman Heritage Museum curator, is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Airman Heritage Foundation for this

project and others like it.

"If you would have asked us five years ago to do this event, we wouldn't have had hardly anything," he said. "The foundation is finding and buying the rare uniforms, specimen badges and regalia, so now we can draw from that collection."

Those who took part enjoyed the event, and one MTI was especially enthusiastic about her historic attire.

Master Sgt. Christina Richard put on bright red lipstick and did her hair in the style of a woman serving in the Women in the Air Force, or WAFs, in the 1950s. Shultz showed her pictures of how the women looked from a history book, and she also searched online to get an idea of how to show up for the photoshoot.

Getting into character as a WAF took Richard about thirty

minutes and lots of hair gel.

"There were a ton of bobby pins, and I kept having to readjust them because my hair is naturally curly, so every time I put one in, a curl would pop out," she said.

Richard reflected on how times have changed. In the 1950's, the loose, spiraling tendrils around her face would have been acceptable, but now, all the hair has to be secured back in a sleek bun.

"Men didn't really care, and they were probably wanting women to look nicer back then," she speculated. "Now, the focus is more on women's work ethic."

The photos were taken by Master Sgt. Timothy Nadolny, non-commissioned officer in charge of Deliberate Leadership Development at the MTI schoolhouse.

Photography is a hobby of his, picked up when he was

stationed in Okinawa, Japan, so he offered his services for the mural project. In shooting the photos, he hoped to evoke an understanding of the responsibility and honor of an MTI.

"As new instructors get to MTIS, the mural will be that first impression of what it means to mold civilians into Airmen, and the road ahead of them," Nadolny said. "That sense of awe that they'll get from it, I think that's what we're going for."

The Airmen of the past have come and gone, and the military is a place of major transitions, as is life. Everyone who came together for this project spoke openly about the passage of time and their own career and life progression, but on this one day, they hoped to capture the past as a legacy for those to come after them.

"It is kind of fun for me to do this because I have a big appreciation for it myself," Shultz said. "I am the guy who tries to put these kinds of things together, but I'm getting old. I'm trying to leave behind people who would take my place and do basically the same thing. It's a passion for remembrance."

Watts, too, is on his way out and he already has his successor, Master Sgt. Jeffrey Tutterow, who will see the project to completion. Watts said he may never see the mural up on the wall, but he is glad that he had a hand in getting the project going.

"It's really nice seeing it all come together," he said. "It's been a really cool project. It's been fun for me."

DLIELC international students receive generosity, support during COVID-19

By Annette Janetzke

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When Dan Vega, American Members of International Goodwill to Others, or AMIGO, program manager sent out a notice to all AMIGO sponsors for help with providing masks for international students at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, he received several generous responses to help.

Master Sgt. Jeanett Vielman said her motivation to help with the homemade masks was, “my love and appreciation for DLI and its mission. I wanted to make something special for the students to show them how special they are and how happy I am to have them here in San Antonio.”

And even though she's on duty 24/7, Vielman makes time in the evenings after leaving work and continues to sew masks on the weekends.

“I'm so happy I can do something for DLI students,” She said. “Their journey here in San Antonio is affected at the moment due to this virus, but love and hospitality from us can have a positive impact.”

AMIGO sponsor Daisy Whisenant saw the need, started searching various avenues, and found a group of craft ladies who donated one mask to low-income schools for every one purchased. She decided to purchase \$150 worth of masks for the first run since it was for an opportunity to assist our students. Now all the additional masks she's provided are donated. Most are from a doctor's wife, who likes to sew.

“I miss our dinner party celebrations of the students' birthdays and graduations immensely during this time of



Master Sgt. Jeanett Vielman displays one of the handmade masks she donated for the students at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

COURTESY PHOTO

limitations on gatherings, Whisenant said. “They're so far from home, and I want them to know we care and to know they have friends in the United States. When Dan sent out a request for facemasks, I felt the masks would allow more opportunity for the DLI students to enjoy the company of others during this period.”

“I found it fun visiting with DLI students,” Whisenant said after she met some students while at DLI delivering masks

on one of her two visits. “I'm so happy to be of help to these precious guests from all over the world, to let them practice their English and enjoy American friendship.”

Another AMIGO Sponsor, Alice Vida, also heard the call and stepped up to provide masks for the DLI students. She is a volunteer with a charity called Threads of Love, a group of volunteers who make items for premature infants in intensive care.

After the sewing headquarters were closed to abide with the stay-at-home request, the volunteers were asked to make cover masks for the nurses and doctors for the hospitals they supply with TOL items. Her church ladies decided to sew the masks at home.

“We continue to do this but we are now sewing masks for policemen, firemen, and EMS,” Vida said. “So we went from sewing masks with ties to

sewing masks with elastic.

“I had fabric pieces that I washed and cut in rectangles. This is the fabric used for the 40 masks I made for DLI,” she said. “I was happy to provide the masks for students to allow them to have mobility around the base. Since I had recent experience making masks, I knew I could make some masks while I was in place at home.”

DLIELC has received 160 homemade donated masks from AMIGO sponsors.

Battling COVID: A cyber Airman's story

By Samantha Mathison

960TH CYBERSPACE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Tech. Sgt. Brandon Ibanez, a cyber intelligence analyst with the 854th Combat Operations Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Training Annex, doesn't wear a helmet to work, nor does he wear a sword or shield.

As a Gladiator in the 960th Cyberspace Wing, it's not a requirement to don the traditional uniform of ancient Roman fighters, and it would be impractical because the enemy in cyberspace doesn't attack using guns or spears.

Instead, the threat lies in their use of malware, phishing and denial of service cyber-related attacks.

To fend off these threats, Ibanez's role in his unit requires him to analyze intelligence and triangulate technical, geographical and operational information to provide situational awareness for leadership. This information enables his leaders to determine the best course of action in any given scenario.

"I initially joined the Air Force Reserve to serve my country and give back in any way I could," Ibanez said. "Over time, my reasons have grown to include a true sense of having a large impact on my organization and the Air Force."

Ibanez also wears another 'helmet,' so to speak, aside from being a traditional Reservist.

In his civilian career, he works for a biopharmaceutical company that develops and manufactures a variety of therapies for patients.

It's his responsibility to monitor the security of the company's physical locations in Lake County, Illinois, while simultaneously monitoring global events and intelligence for any potential threats to global assets or travelers.

"We monitor local and international events from our Global Security Operations Center," he said, "and in emergency situations, we coordinate with numerous teams to ensure a successful conclusion to the situation."

According to Ibanez, pharmaceutical companies are considered essential services, so they must continue to manufacture therapies and maintain supply chains, so patients can continue to receive their medications.

"Therefore, protecting our fellow workers is essential," Ibanez said. "I



ANNA CZEKAJ

Tech. Sgt. Brandon Ibanez, a cyber intelligence analyst with the 854th Combat Operations Squadron, stands for a photo outside his home in Chicago, Illinois, June 15.

monitor and supply our temperature screening stations with a variety of personal protective equipment which is provided to all incoming employees. Additionally, I monitor COVID-19 trends in real-time and report any developments to our leadership team."

For example, Ibanez said, he routinely monitors potential supply chain issues from PPE thefts and he watches over global travelers to ensure there will not be any impacts to their safety. These actions help protect employees from COVID-19.

According to Ibanez, everyone in the operations center has to work six days on and two days off to keep it running 24-7, which can make for a long workweek.

"My family has been completely supportive and they continuously check-in on my wellbeing to make sure I am not taking on too much," he said. "Specifically, my wife has been a great wingman through all of this. She routinely goes out of her way to be a good listener and provides me feedback

to help overcome challenges."

Ibanez said that he has also received support from his unit.

"Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, my unit has been great," he said. "My leadership team has proactively sent COVID-19 updates directly to our members and many have personally reached out to ask about my wellbeing. I could not ask for more."

According to the 854th COS Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Division superintendent who has known Ibanez for almost five years, Senior Master Sgt. Stephen Kolberg, the 854th COS has members all over the country who travel to San Antonio for unit training assemblies and annual tours.

Since the effects of the COVID-19 virus have interrupted the unit's training schedule they've had to adapt and overcome obstacles of how to provide training, meet readiness requirements and develop products, Kolberg said.

"Fortunately, we have been able to

"I focus on creating a plan to be successful and I avoid focusing on how hard something is, which helps me decrease any potential anxiety or stress so I can accomplish the objective and deliver great results."

Tech. Sgt. Brandon Ibanez, 854th Combat Operations Squadron cyber intelligence analyst

meet these demands as well as connect with members through a virtual environment capability," Kolberg said. "Although this type of UTA is not ideal in the long term, the circumstances have inspired innovative thinking to overcome what was previously perceived as a limitation, which adds a new strength to the 854 COS and our members."

Unlike active-duty Airmen who tend to live in the local area and are adjusted to a work schedule that effectively allows them to conduct missions, Reservists are not always co-located with the unit they work in.

Ibanez is one of these members, as he lives in Chicago, Illinois.

"It's not always easy being a traditional Reservist and Tech. Sgt. Ibanez stands out as a reliable and hard worker," Kolberg said. "He's the type of person who takes the initiative, whether it be stepping up to develop needed training, helping others with whatever challenges they are facing or providing mentorship, he has always been one to count on."

As tiring and stressful as the pandemic has been for Ibanez, he said that resiliency training has been key to overcoming the challenges.

"At the end of each day, I know that the work I did has made a difference and has an impact," Ibanez said. "I focus on creating a plan to be successful and I avoid focusing on how hard something is, which helps me decrease any potential anxiety or stress so I can accomplish the objective and deliver great results."

AFCEC leads hurricane season preparedness

By David Ford

AFIMSC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

With a projected record-setting hurricane season in the making, the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Readiness Directorate at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, is once again urging the Air Force community to "be ready" for natural disasters.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season that runs from June 1 to November 30 could include 19 named storms and 10 hurricanes — six of which are likely to be classified as major hurricanes.

The Air Force Be Ready awareness campaign, launched by AFCEC in July 2011, led to the Air Force Be Ready mobile app, a platform lauded by the Air Force community for its in-depth preparation guides and wide variety of critical information. The app features emergency phone numbers, web sites, a storm preparation checklist, potential storm threats, a customizable family plan and basic preparation recommendations.

It's an all-in-one survival tool, developed with input from Air Force members who use the information to protect their homes, families and lives, said Rob Genova, AFCEC emergency management operations support manager.

"We are pleased with the overall feedback we continuously receive from Air Force members and even other services," Genova said. "Our Emergency Management Division's education and training section is constantly looking at new ways to effectively communicate emergency preparedness and to provide quality products to our installations and surrounding communities to be ready."

Hurricane Michael showed the Air Force is good at preparing, Genova said. Installations with hurricanes and typhoons as an identified hazard have well-prepared installation emergency management plans. Even with the unpredictability that Hurricane Michael presented, those installations were able to prepare quickly for the storm's impending arrival.

For example, the 325th Fighter Wing leadership at Tyndall Air Force Base followed emergency plans and evacuated 11,000 people in 48 hours to two



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neighboring installations further inland well before the eye of the storm arrived.

Nearly two years removed from the third-largest storm to ever hit the continental United States, AFCEC members at Tyndall can attest that focusing on readiness in the event of a tropical storm and worse, a hurricane and its aftermath, is extremely critical.

"The Air Force does a very good job of preparing for events, but where we need to put more focus on is 'What does an Airman do in the days after a catastrophic event?'" said Mike Connors, AFCEC Emergency Management Division chief. "Many of us had no idea what our homeowner's policies said or what the different types of coverage meant. What is the difference between a field adjuster and a desk adjuster? Should you get a lawyer or a public adjuster? Those are just some of the examples of what we'll be putting into a new publication in the near future."

For more information on hurricane preparedness and disaster readiness, go to the Air Force Be Ready web site at www.beready.af.mil or download the Air Force Be Ready app that's available for iOS and Android platforms.

RANDOLPH

Online tools ease COVID-19 turbulence at 12th FTW

By Sabrina Fine

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For the last 20 to 30 years, staff members of the 12th Flying Training Wing's 12th Operations Group have tackled flying operations traditionally. Then, in mid-March, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and changed everything.

Fast forward three months, and the enthusiasm of Col. Rob Ludington, 12th OG commander, emanates through the screen during a Commercial Virtual Remote Teams' video chat interview.

"We use the phrase that, 'We like to be humble, credible, approachable and professional instructor pilots,' Ludington said. "Part of that is carrying a certain demeanor, which includes things like shaking people's hands."

Before COVID-19, the members of the 12th OG were busy producing the world's best instructor pilots. There were no requirements to "mask up" or "social distance."

In January, COVID-19 started as a whisper.

"Messages started coming out through the media, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, all the way up to leadership in the White House," said Maj. Nathan Moseley, 12th OG innovation officer. Then, we saw policy changes at the 59th Medical Wing and the 12th Operations Group."

In mid-March, COVID-19 elevated to a loud roar.

"I very much remember the first day that COVID started affecting us because I was in the 99th Flying Training Squadron and we got tasked to come up with a better way to



SABRINA FINE

Maj. Marcus Mosher (left) and Maj. Nathan Moseley (right) participate in a video chat June 22 on the Commercial Virtual Remote environment (CVR), which has enabled the 12th Operations Group to adapt and overcome challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

do social distancing," said Maj. Marcus Mosher, 12th OG deputy chief of innovation. "We needed to figure out how we were going to apply this because our briefing rooms are small."

The members of the 12th OG knew that if they contracted the virus, they would not be able to fly. Furthermore, they would have to enact additional protocols to keep their coworkers and family members safe.

"What we desired was a secure way to remotely video conference, message and share files, and that is where CVR Teams came along," Moseley

said. "It allowed us to share the information that we use in our mission planning, briefing and debriefings."

A testament to the adaptation, CVR Environment was a platform created by the Department of Defense to enable the armed services to transition to a telework environment. The service enables collaborations through capabilities such as chat, video, virtual meetings, screen share, document collaboration and storage.

By late March, members of the 12th OG were greeting each other by bumping elbows and tapping toes, and they were

also utilizing the virtual or online environment as much as possible.

Mosher and Moseley said access to CVR was a game-changer.

For some, using CVR opened up a whole new technological world. Documents are moving seamlessly from the Air Force network to personal phones and computers. Messages are being sent and received without getting bogged down in traditional email services.

"For example, I've got pilots who sit up in each of our towers every day who monitor the flying operation, and they work directly for me as the

group commander," Ludington said. "Now, one of the primary ways they communicate with me is using Teams to send me messages in real time from the tower, and I just read it on my cellphone. It is an incredibly effective and efficient way to share information with a large group of people. That's why I don't want it to go away; it's enabling our mission. I want to keep it, regardless of COVID-19."

For younger Airmen who used collaboration tools in college, Teams is a welcomed improvement that is making the 12th OG stronger.

"We've got to realize that people taking their first oath of office today have not known a world without reliable, immediate, remote technologies and connectivity," Moseley said.

Mosher and Moseley believe giving 21st century Airmen technology that moves at 21st-century speeds will help with recruitment and retention across the Air Force.

"They will say, 'I'm going to stay in the Air Force past my initial commitment because I now have these great tools,'" Mosher said. "It allows me the flexibility that I can't get other places."

In the future, the members of 12th OG see CVR being embedded into all aspects of mission planning, regardless of COVID-19.

"I think we'll go back to the way we were doing business before, but we don't want to regress and throw away the good progress we've made with respect to mobile activity," Moseley said. "While we can go back to work, we can't go back in time, with respect to the tools we've been given."

College students participate in virtual civilian internship

By Toni Whaley

AIR FORCE'S PERSONNEL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As COVID-19 continues to shape a new normal for Air Force and Space Force operations, several hundred college students virtually on boarded as Air Force civilian service summer interns June 15.

Civilian personnel staffs across the Air Force enterprise in processed approximately 500 college students participating in the Air Force's Personnel Center virtual Premier College Intern Program, or vPCIP.

"Our team worked hard to put together a viable program with meaningful experiences for the participants," said Dave VanSteenburg, Director, Civilian Personnel Operations. "They took an in-residence program and translated it into a virtual one in less than 90 days, which is simply amazing. It was important to do so because



COURTESY GRAPHIC

we made a commitment to these interns."

Interns participated in a weeklong symposium that included a welcome from Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower Gwendolyn DeFilippi, an overview of civilian service, and the professional opportunities

civilian service with the Air Force offers, said William Cavanaugh, AFPC Force Renewal and Strategic Engagement Chief.

The virtual internship will run for six weeks and consist of an acculturation week developed by Air University, a group project spanning the

entirety of the program, four senior mentor small group sessions with 50 Air Force civilian senior leaders from across the enterprise, and a career field-specific functional experience.

In addition to partnering with Air University, we also incorporated a "Chat with an Airman" day as part of the symposium where active duty guest speakers from various professions give interns first-hand knowledge and a better understanding of what the Air Force does, said Cavanaugh.

"We made a commitment to these interns and that means something to the Air Force," Cavanaugh said. "We work hard to build relationships with the universities they attend—relationships that allow us to have access to their campus and their students to share Air Force civil service opportunities. We want to

cultivate a reputation as the organization of choice with these universities and their students."

PCIP feeds the Air Force's Palace Acquire and Copper Cap programs with approximately 75 percent of participating students.

"The Air Force depends on this summer internship to produce candidates for our Palace Acquire and Copper Cap programs, ensuring we are able to meet future demands in STEM, Cyber and other critical specialties," VanSteenburg said.

"If after the experience they feel the Air Force is right for them and their supervisors feel they are right for the Air Force, they will be given an opportunity to convert to a three-year extended internship that could lead to permanent outplacement," Cavanaugh said.

For more information about the PCIP, go to www.afintern.com.

Virtual class fills need for potential homebuyers

By Robert Goetz

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Now that mortgage rates have hit a sweet spot for the budgets of many individuals and families seeking to buy a home, the time is right to become better informed about the home-buying process.

"Home Sweet Home: Home-Buying Strategies," a virtual class offered from 10-11:30 a.m., July 23, by the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Military & Family Readiness Center, will address a variety of topics to help prospective home buyers make the right decisions for themselves and their families.

"Homeownership requires a certain level of financial commitment and responsibility," said Sarah

Henson, JBSA-Randolph M&FRC community readiness consultant. "If you think you're ready to make this commitment, then this presentation will give you plenty of advice to help you get started on the road to a home sweet home of your own."

The class, delivered via Zoom by Don Lenmark, JBSA-Randolph M&FRC personal financial counselor, will provide participants with strategies for home buying and resolving mortgage issues, Henson said.

"Topics such as buying versus renting, the home-buying process, choosing a Realtor, the closing process and advice on how to resolve mortgage payment issues will be discussed," she said. "The presentation will also include a list of home-buying information



COURTESY GRAPHIC

resources."

Various mortgage loan and refinancing options — including those that are best for service members — will be addressed along with developing a budget, Henson said.

"Developing a budget is important in general, but is absolutely essential in order to determine how much of your monthly expenses are available to go toward housing costs," she said. "Participants will also be able to determine their current

debt-to-income ratio and understand why that is important for them to know before applying for a home loan."

The presentation will also address what homeowners should do if they are having trouble paying their mortgage, understanding foreclosure, alternatives to foreclosure and how to avoid becoming a victim of mortgage scams.

The total cost of homeownership is another

important topic, Henson said.

"This is something that is often overlooked," she said. "We will cover many of the possible additional costs to consider beyond your monthly mortgage payment."

The recent decline in mortgage interest rates offers prospective homeowners a chance to save a lot of money on their monthly payments, Henson said.

"Mortgage rates just hit an all-time record low and continue to slowly drift downward with a distinct possibility that the average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage could dip below 3 percent later this year," she said.

Service members, retirees and civilians who wish to take part in the home-buying presentation should send an email to the JBSA-Randolph M&FRC at randolphmfrf@us.af.mil or call 210-652-5321 and leave your name, phone number and email address.

AFRS solidifies Total Force partnership with ANG

By Master Sgt. Chance Babin

AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In a historic milestone for the Total Force recruiting enterprise, Air Force Recruiting Service and Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention signed a mutual support agreement that will combine resources and integrate staff to enhance marketing and advertising.

“This is another leap forward in our journey to have one Total Force recruiting effort,” said Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, AFRS commander. “Having our Air National Guard join forces under the same, single contract with Air Force Recruiting Service will drive even greater collaboration and ensure we work as one world-class team getting the message out about serving full time or part time in the Air Force.”

For the Guard, this contract will enhance opportunities to reach a broader audience and strengthen the Air Force brand.

“This collaboration between the Air National Guard and Air Force Recruiting Service is the most

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Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, Air Force Recruiting Service commander

significant integration initiative to date for marketing and represents a long term relationship that will bolster brand awareness and lead generation for both components for years to come,” said Brig. Gen. April Vogel, the National Guard Bureau's Manpower, Personnel, Recruiting and Services director. “The ANG is excited about the expanded reach this partnership with AFRS and its commercial partners brings to the Guard.”

For the ANG and AFRS, the support agreement boosts their ability to reach potential applicants and inform them on the opportunities to serve full time or part time.

“This support agreement between the

ANG and AFRS recruiting is unprecedented — we're literally making history. I can see this effort opening the door for other partnership opportunities within the Air Force, as whole Total Force,” said Lt. Col. Jacob Chisolm, AFRS Strategic Marketing Division deputy. “This support agreement allows ANG and AFRS to pool our resources, creating a synergistic effect that will foster ingenuity and innovation across the components by forcing us out of our comfort zones and opening our eyes to new ways of doing business.”

The Air Force is embarking on a Total Force recruiting enterprise approach to recruit the nation's best talent. Recently the Air Force Reserve officially became the fourth group with AFRS as part of a classic association.

“The return on investment from this joint venture will be more significant than our previous individual efforts,” Vogel added. “A Total Force initiative like this strengthens our ANG missions. It helps contribute to a unified message across the components because we recruit together, train together and fight together — one Air Force, with multiple ways to serve.”

The ANG's advertising contract expired just over 10 months ago, so getting back to having a contract and being able to have a consolidated message will allow the ANG to get the word out about opportunities to serve in the Guard.

“By combining our resources — funding, time and talent — we will be able to deliver a product that does a much better job of telling the Total Force Air Force story and educating the American public on opportunities to serve in our Air Force, full time or part time,” Chisolm said. “I don't want to speak for the ANG, but I'm sure they're very excited to ‘turn the lights back on’ and get their message out to the American public. I'm just happy we're able to use the contracts and relationships we already have in place to

give an assist.”

For the ANG, now having a marketing contract means they can start planning campaigns to spread the word about opportunities in the Guard.

“Joining the integrated marketing contract not only allows the Air National Guard to join AFRS for Total Force advertising and events at the national level, but we'll also have local marketing plans for the 54 states and territories where we have units,” said Col. Nashid Salahuddin, ANG Recruiting and Retention Division chief. “In the coming months we'll be working with states to develop and implement their plans.”

Another move that is taking place is adding ANG personnel to the AFRS marketing team at Headquarters AFRS. The Air Force Reserve made this move roughly a year ago as part of the Total Force Recruiting initiative.

“To support our integration efforts with AFRS the Air National Guard will integrate additional staff positions at AFRS,” said Col. Shaunte Cooper, ANG Advisor to the AFRS commander and AFRS integration chief. “The focus this year are positions in the marketing division to support the integrated marketing contract.”

Working on this agreement has been a process and has taken some time, but it was important to both parties that the deal gets done.

“Because AFRS is subordinate to Air Education and Training Command, all support agreements are managed by the AETC/A4 Readiness Program office. The program manager, Brian Sharp, was very helpful in keeping us on task and abreast of any changes or requirements needed to keep our package moving in the right direction,” Chisolm said. “The biggest lesson learned is that constant communication is a must. The approval process required a preliminary review by both component's comptroller, logistics and legal teams. This step was instrumental in making sure the final coordination went smoothly.”

In addition to recruiting for the regular Air Force, the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard, Total Force recruiting also encompasses the Air Force Academy admissions, Air Force Civilian Service and Air Force ROTC. The Air Force now recruits for America's newest military branch, the U.S. Space Force.