

JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

JULY 24, 2020



PHOTO BY DEBBIE GILDEA

340th Flying Training Group Commander Col. Michael J. Vanzo (left) is welcomed to the 433rd Training Squadron's basic military training graduation ceremony by members of the preparation team.

Reserve squadron, American Airmen march into history

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Drones help JBSA environmental plan

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Reserve Airman MTI embraces challenges

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Esper thanks diversity, inclusion board for tackling tough subjects

By Jim Garamone

DOD NEWS

At its first meeting July 15, the Defense Department's Board on Diversity and Inclusion pledged to rid the department of systemic discrimination.

Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper chartered the board in response to the larger, national conversation on racism and diversity.

Esper said George Floyd's death personally served as a reminder of the racial injustice, bias and prejudice that continues to afflict the United States. "We must continue to do our best to recognize this, to confront it, and to eradicate prejudice and bias and discrimination, because we know we are a reflection of the society that we come from and that we have sworn an oath to protect and defend," he told the board just after signing their charter.

The board will meet every other week and is chaired by Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett.



SENIOR AIRMAN BRANDON ESAU

U.S. Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper speaks during a lunch with Airmen at RAF Mildenhall, England, June 25.

The board's charter looks to smash systemic racism and discrimination in any form.

"Diversity is more than tolerance," Barrett said. "Genuine diversity generates acceptance. This board's mandate is to move forward with alacrity and positively transform the Defense Department for today's service

members and for generations to come."

The board seeks to inculcate a culture of inclusivity.

In addition to Barrett, the board includes Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman Ramón "CZ" Colón-López, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Matthew Donovan, as well as

officer and enlisted personnel of the services. The SEAC has joined Esper on a number of trips in the United States to begin the conversation in the force on diversity and inclusion.

"We had very good discussions — very tough, very candid discussions," Esper said. "The SEAC and I have learned a number of things. One of the things is we don't have a toolkit, a lexicon by which we discuss issues of race and prejudice and bias. It's very uncomfortable to even begin the discussion." Yet the conversations have begun, and will continue, he said.

"This is very important, very historic, it's a chance for us to make a monumental ... and lasting change in ... how we deal with one another, how we treat one another, how we address diversity and inclusion, how we deal with race and bias and prejudice," Esper said. "At the end of the day, it's all about building a more cohesive, a more ready and more capable force in defense of our constitution and our fellow Americans."

20E5/E6 promotion testing window extended

By Staff Sgt. Sahara L. Fales

AIR FORCE'S PERSONNEL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep our Airmen safe, 20E5 and 20E6 promotion testing was previously suspended and resumed when deemed safe by installation commanders.

Although most testing centers have resumed operations, social distancing precautions have significantly impacted the number of Airmen able to test per session. As of June 30, only 32 percent of 20E5 eligible Airmen have tested. Therefore, the Air Force's Personnel Center is extending the promotion testing window for the 20E5 cycle to Aug. 28 to allow as many Airmen as possible to meet the in-cycle promotion release with their peers.

AFPC will remain flexible to changing conditions and will re-adjust timelines if required to ensure the safety of our Airmen.

Currently, there is only a one-month delay from the pre-COVID timeline. Information regarding each cycle is listed below:

20E6

- ▶▶ Testing Window: May 11 — July 31
- ▶▶ File Freeze: July 31
- ▶▶ Estimated Release: Mid-to-late August
- ▶▶ Increments will begin Sept. 1 (those with a date of rank of Aug. 1 will be retroactively applied with backdated pay)

20E5

- ▶▶ Testing Window: May 11 — Aug. 28



COURTESY GRAPHIC

- ▶▶ File Freeze: TBD
- ▶▶ Estimated Release: Mid-to-late September
- ▶▶ Increments will begin Oct. 1 (those with a date of rank of Sept. 1 will be retroactively applied with backdated pay)

For additional information, visit myPers.

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. JBSA Logistics Readiness Squadron has directed us to return to work full time.

This week we had a positive military member in our building walking around and our leadership was sent home but nothing was told to the rest of the people in the building. The positive military person was walking around the building for half of the day.

Are we still authorized to telework and if so why are commanders not directing telework and taking care of their people?

A. Thank you for the opportunity to address concerns regarding leadership actions taken in response to a COVID-19 positive member in your building. The short answer is that leadership across JBSA is encouraged to utilize telework and weather & safety administrative leave when appropriate to ensure the safety of our personnel.

Upon review of the specific incident, it was noted that the supervisor was one of the people sent into restriction of movement,

which caused a delay with normal supervisory notifications of actions taken.

One lesson learned during this incident is ensuring employee notifications are made from the next level of leadership when direct supervisors are not available.

When a member is found positive, contact tracing is accomplished. All members in the building who have been determined to have direct contact with the member are placed in restricted on movement for 14 days; the office in which the person was working is locked/closed; and all of the common areas are cleaned and sanitized in accordance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and 502nd Air Base Wing Public Health Officer Emergency guidance. After 24 hours, the member's office is cleaned and sanitized. A summary of the actions taken is then sent out to the squadron.

Q. Why isn't the "Taj Mahal" at JBSA-Randolph illuminated in the mornings at 4:45 a.m.?

Last month the lights were finally turned back on. This week the lights are turned back off.

Saving energy is important but the Taj is a symbol of AF innovation — an Airman wanted to build a beautiful water tower and certainly succeeded.

JBSA-Randolph is also very dark in the mornings and the Taj is a beacon in the surrounding gloom.

A. Thank you for your praise of this national historic landmark. In an effort to save energy, the Taj Mahal is only illuminated during the hours of darkness when there is the most activity on the installation, from 5-7:30 a.m. and then from 8:30-10 p.m. daily. Efforts, both large, visible ones like this, and smaller ones like turning lights off in buildings at the end of the day, add up to

significant energy savings across all of JBSA.

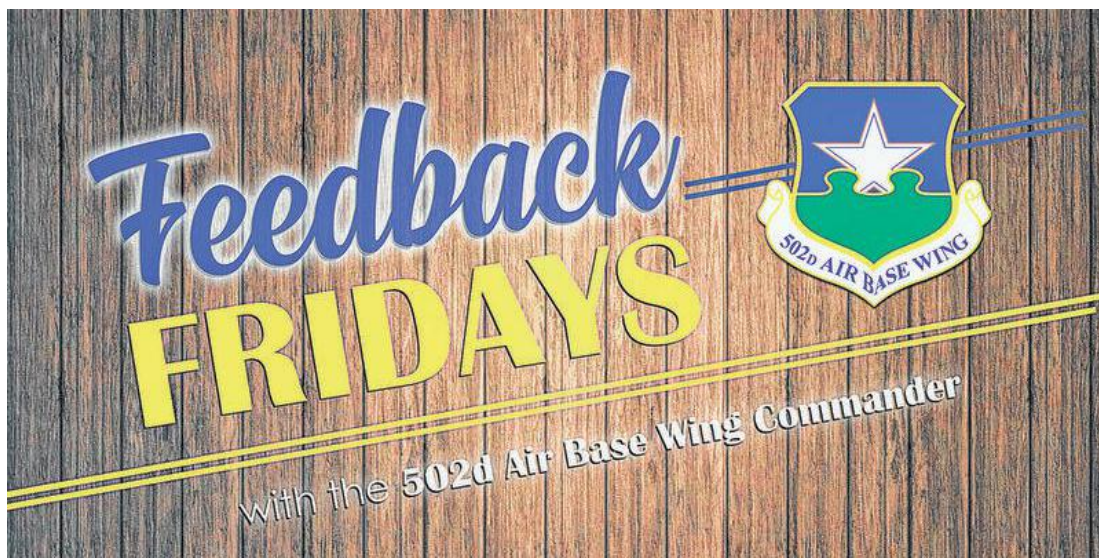
Q. I noticed a large flock of birds in the parking lot of building 977 at JBSA-Randolph.

While building 977 isn't on the flight line, it seems odd to have such a large bird population at JBSA- Randolph. Are these birds a bird strike threat?

A. Thank you for keeping a watchful eye! The 12th Flying Training Wing routinely tracks local bird species, flight paths, and populations as part of our Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard program.

At the 12th Flying Training Wing, they have a full-time wildlife biologist from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on staff to help with our efforts in reducing aircraft bird strikes.

The 12th FTW safety team has been notified and will investigate the area. Thank you again.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

No place for racism, discrimination in U.S. military, Army Gen. Mark A. Milley says

By Jim Garamone
DOD NEWS

Army Gen. Mark A. Milley condemned systemic racism saying, "There is no place our armed forces for manifestations or symbols of racism, bias or discrimination," during testimony before the House Armed Services Committee July 9.

Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper testified about the military role in wake of the killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis policemen in May.

"George Floyd's death amplified the pain, the frustration and the fear that so many of our fellow Americans live with day in and day out," the chairman said. "I have many policemen in my family, and I am personally outraged by George Floyd's brutal and senseless killing. The protests that have ensued not only speak to this injustice, but also to centuries of injustice towards Black Americans. We, as a nation and as a military, are still struggling with racism, and we have much work to do."

The military is built around teams of service members banding together to accomplish shared missions, Milley said. "We who wear the cloth of our nation understand that cohesion is a force multiplier," he said. "Divisiveness leads to defeat. As one of our famous presidents said, 'a house divided does not stand.'"

Milley said the U.S. military is a cohesive team consisting of people of different races and genders and religious and sexual orientations working to accomplish their mission and peace in the war, all over the globe. "Equality and opportunity are matters of military readiness, not just political correctness."

The military helped lead the integration of U.S. society when then-President Harry S. Truman integrated the armed forces in 1948 — 17 years before the 1965 Civil Rights Act.

"But we are not perfect," the chairman said. "And we must thoughtfully examine our institution and ensure it is a place where all Americans see themselves represented and have equal opportunity to succeed,



KIMBERLY LIDDICK-BYRNES

Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testifies before the House Armed Services Committee on the Defense Department's authorities and roles in relation to civilian law enforcement, July 9.

especially in leadership positions."

He noted that all members of the military swear an oath to support and defend the Constitution. "This oath underpins my duties as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I am deeply committed to fulfilling both the letter and the spirit of my oath regardless of consequences to self," Milley said. "We, the United States military, hold dear the Constitution and the principle of an apolitical military that is so deeply rooted in the very essence of our republic."

Milley clarified June 1 news reports that implied he was in command of the troops protecting Washington, D.C.

"My role as the chairman is to be the principal military adviser to the president of the United States, the secretary of defense, the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council," he said. "Throughout the recent period of civil unrest in our nation, I exercised this role exclusively. At no time was I ever in command of any forces. All of my actions have been consistent with my statutory authority as an adviser, who is explicitly not in the chain of command."

Milley said the vast majority of protests around the nation were peaceful. "Peaceful protests means that American freedom is working," he said.

Still, some turned violent, and governors felt the need to call-up

National Guardsmen to supplement local police efforts.

Violent protests expanded from 13 cities on May 29 to 34 cities two days later. "By the morning of 1 June, 29 states and the District of Columbia had activated the National Guards totaling more than 17,000 National Guardsmen and women," he said.

In the nation's capital, violence escalated. "Our nation's monuments and government buildings were defaced, businesses in D.C. were looted, and some were set ablaze," Milley said.

There were more than 420 arrests, and 150 law enforcement officers and a half-dozen National Guardsmen were injured. National Guardsmen from 11 different states were called up to assist in Washington.

"Since the protests began, I sought information to help me assess the ability of federal, state and local authorities to handle situations under their responsibility," Milley said. "I continually assessed and advised that it was not necessary to employ active duty troops in response to the civil unrest occurring in our nation."

"It was my view then, and it remains so now, that local, state and federal police backed up by the National Guard under governor control, could, and continually can, effectively handle the

security situation in every case across the country," he continued.

Early on, there was a shortage of National Guardsmen, and Milley recommended that Esper put 1,700 active duty personnel on an increased alert level. "None of them [was] ever used, and there was never an active-duty troop used in any location anywhere in the United States," the chairman said.

Milley also advised and Esper ordered de-escalation measures to be taken, including having guardsmen remove weapons and helmets inconsistent with force protection measures. "These de-escalation measures were widely implemented, ... and, by 4 June, active duty and National Guard units began redeploying from the vicinity of Washington, D.C., back to home station," he said.

The guardsmen did their jobs professionally and with sensitivity, Milley said.

"The United States military comes from the people of our nation, and we remain dedicated to the Constitution," he said. "We will never turn our back on that document. We swore an oath of allegiance — at the cost of our lives — to an idea embedded within that document, and we will always protect it."

Joint Base San Antonio 2020 Airshow cancelled

From 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

As Joint Base San Antonio continues to align COVID-19 prevention efforts with the City of San Antonio and to reduce the spread of the virus, the JBSA Airshow scheduled for November will not take place this year.

"I know this is disappointing, but this decision was made with the health and safety of the JBSA members and surrounding communities in mind," said Brig.

Gen. Caroline Miller, JBSA and 502nd Air Base Wing commander. "Thank you for your unwavering support and patience as we work through this time together."

The next airshow is scheduled for April 23-24, 2022, at JBSA-Randolph, along with the United States Air Force 75th Anniversary.

For more information, contact the 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs at 502abw.paola.inbox@us.af.mil.

Army offers college prep website amid pandemic

By Joseph Lacdan

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

As high school students look to continue learning in a COVID-19 environment, the Army has provided an online option to help students prepare for college.

Whether or not a school chooses in-class or online learning, students can prepare for college using the Army's college readiness website, March2Success, to augment their learning and study for entrance exams.

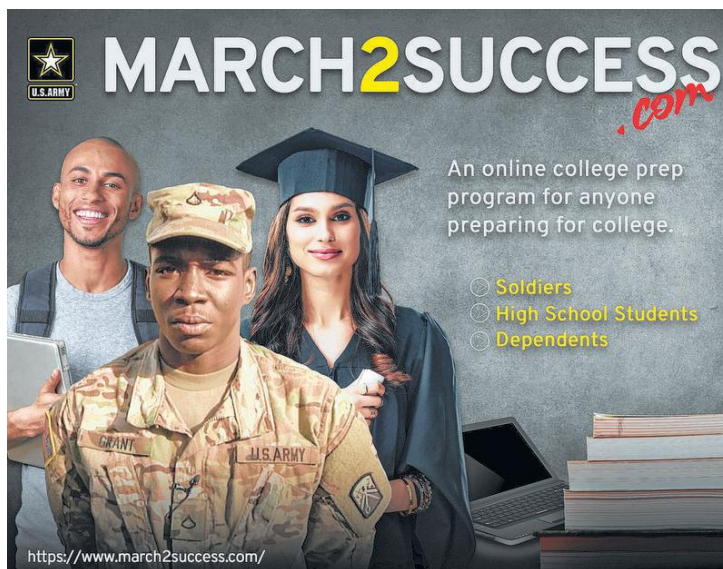
Students can take practice tests for exams like the ACT, SAT, Medical College Admission Test and Dental Admission Test. The website provides an alternative for students unable to seek a tutor or join a study group due to pandemic restrictions.

"The COVID pandemic saw parents homeschooling their students to end the current school year," said Larane Guthrie-Clarkson, chief of education for USAREC. "And if a parent is not an educator or is not a subject-matter expert in a particular subject and a student needs help, then we can put them into March2Success."

With many schools' start dates shifting, more students must turn to online resources like the Army's March2Success site, she said.

After COVID-19 forced nationwide school closures, active March2Success users dropped from 89,211 in May 2019 to 50,432 in May 2020, as many schools canceled some standardized testing.

During the summer months, the March2Success site could still help students prepare for the upcoming fall



semesters while remaining at home, Guthrie-Clarkson said.

The webpage offers a wide palette of resources for high school students or adults taking undergraduate courses for the first time. Future Soldiers can also use the program's study aids to prepare for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test.

While the program has materials aimed at students in grades 8-12, Soldiers planning to attend college can access the online educational tools to prepare for the entrance exams or use the materials

as a refresher course. Students can access the website's free services at www.march2success.com.

Students study at their own pace, take pre-tests to determine their aptitude level and help educators manage their learning. The program's users prep for the entrance exams first by taking a diagnostic pretest to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Students will then develop a study plan with goals tailored to each user.

"Students can sit there and use it anytime," Guthrie-Clarkson said. "So

they're not restricted to a specific time of day unless parental instruction or teacher instructions work that way. For example, if I'm not good in, say fractions, I can practice fractions, and it should increase my score."

The program also has resources for potential recruits who are considering joining the Army. Using the mobile app, Career Navigator, they can learn about Army careers and locate recruiters from their smartphones. Guthrie-Clarkson said there have been discussions on how to expand the site's features due to the need for online learning options.

In 2018, the Army added graduate program exams, the Medical College Admissions Test, the Dental Admissions Test and various nursing program tests to its list of features.

The Stars Elements app allows students to build an educational foundation for chemistry and physical science with the use of interactive models, challenges and games.

Originally conceived in the late '90s, the program provides a convenient resource for students who have limited access to teachers and tutors. The program has added game-based learning to its curriculum, including sports-based apps GoArmy Edge Football and GoArmy Edge Soccer, where coaches and players can virtually design plays.

Recruiters have marketed the website at high schools across the country, though no commitment to military service is required. Guthrie-Clarkson said the Army provides the website as an education augmentation tool as a public service to the nation's high school students.

AAFES partners with military relief funds to help Soldiers, Airmen in need

From Army & Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

Helping those in need is always in season — and now Army & Air Force Exchange Service shoppers can donate any amount to military relief funds year-round at their nearest Exchange store.

Soldiers, Airmen and other authorized shoppers can donate to Army Emergency Relief, or AER, or the Air Force Assistance Fund, or AFAF, at the register at any Exchange.

Shoppers have the option to donate in

increments of \$1, \$5 and \$10 or can enter in a custom amount. Online donations can be made in \$5 increments during checkout at ShopMyExchange.com.

"AER and AFAF take exceptional care of Soldiers, Airmen and families navigating difficult times, such as during the recent upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Exchange Director/CEO Tom Shull. "We've seen our military community grow stronger by standing together through the pandemic."

AER and AFAF provide emergency assistance, sponsor educational

programs and offer community programs that make life better for service members and their families.

"The Exchange, and their valued customers, continue to be a huge supporter of our mission of helping members of the Army family," said retired Lt. Gen. Raymond V. Mason, AER director. "The option of year-round giving in Exchange stores further strengthens this fantastic partnership and allows AER to expand assistance to Soldier and their families."

Since 2017, Exchange shoppers have donated to AER and AFAF at the

register, but only during select giving periods throughout the year. Exchange shoppers have donated nearly \$800,000 to these agencies in the last three years. The year-round giving and custom amount options will help sustain support for service members and families throughout the year.

"Exchange shoppers have been generous with their donations," said retired Lt. Gen. John D. Hopper Jr., CEO of the Air Force Aid Society, one of four charities that benefit from the AFAF. "Every dollar given is a helping hand to Airmen and their families in need."

FORT SAM HOUSTON

JBSA environmental program takes off with UAS technology

By Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

What began as a project to improve land surveying, floodplain mapping, vegetation classification and endangered species management at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis has become a revolutionary innovation that could save the Air Force millions of dollars and countless hours of labor.

The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center's Unmanned Aerial System, or UAS, project was initiated in late 2019. Then, in March of this year, the Air Force presented a \$3 million Small Business Innovation Research Program, or SBIR, award for the project.

The award, which was presented to a selected small business, brings the amount of government investments in the program to \$6 million over four years. Added to the \$50 million in funding from industry and venture capitalists the small business secured, this brings the total investment in the project to \$56 million.

That funding has kicked the project, which began as an effort to protect the habitat of an endangered species, into high gear.

"The entire project revolves around the golden-cheeked warbler, which is present on JBSA-Camp Bullis," said Paul Jurena, natural resources specialist, Air Force Civil Engineer Center. "Nesting of this species occurs here, and in the central region in Texas."

Taking responsibility for protecting the birds' habitat is something JBSA environmental

specialists take very seriously.

"As a federal agency, the U.S. Air Force is responsible for reporting any activities that could impact the species, especially during the breeding season, March through June, to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They are responsible for enforcement of the Endangered Species Act," Jurena said.

Prior to the AFIMSC project, surveying the habitat conditions at JBSA-Camp Bullis was a timely process.

"Sending government or contract representatives physically into an environment to examine and study the habitat can be grueling work, as well as costly," said Dustin Dickens, the UAS project manager in the AFIMSC Innovation Office.

Through regular testing of the project's UAS capabilities, which last took place July 9, surveying the habitat should soon become exponentially easier.

"Sending Unmanned Aerial Systems instead can usually accomplish mapping and studies of the habitat much faster and more efficiently, which in turn provides a costs saving," Dickens said.

While saving time and money is an important part of the project, making sure assessments are accurate is essential to continuing military training activities at JBSA-Camp Bullis.

"The Biological Opinion provided by USFWS to Camp Bullis dictates the minimum size of habitat needed for this species, as well as the basic biological parameters to

measure," Jurena said. "It requires JBSA to assure a minimum of 5,000 acres of suitable habitat based upon tree size, species, and density parameters. With the new UAS technology acquired through the SBIR award, the process should be faster, and much more accurate."

"The UAVs, depending on their sensors, can identify and determine parameters that the human just cannot, which increases accuracy and identification of specific habitats," Dickens said. "The systems also support machine learning algorithms, or artificial intelligence programs, that can learn from data and improve from experience, without human intervention."

The ability to achieve repeated results is also important to the effectiveness of the project.

"By having data about the habitat that is repeatable, and can be easily gathered through a UAS, makes for easier determinations on where the breeding habitats are, and thereby, benefiting JBSA and their training mission," Jurena said. "This platform can give installation biologists better ideas of where the habitats are and can identify those areas that need further evaluation."

This information is important to those who train at JBSA-Camp Bullis.

"Once the habitats are assessed, the location and identification of habitats give mission and training personnel knowledge of where they need to avoid," Jurena said.

The testing accomplished thus far has involved a



SARAYUTH PINTHONG

An unmanned aerial system is prepared for a test flight July 9 at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis.

small-scale UAS with multi-spectral imagery and light detection and ranging (LiDAR) sensors to classify habitat suitability for the golden-cheeked warbler, Jurena said.

During a recent outing with the UAS's, July 9 and 10, the results were positive.

"Overall, the flights were a success and the results are very promising," Dickens said. "AFIMSC and Air Force Civil Engineer Center are working toward a path for additional testing. Once complete will have a better understanding of the needs and feasibility for wide-scale implementation."

The ability to utilize the technology and the data collected across a wide variety of agencies is what makes the completion of testing and beginning of implementation so important.

"Once fully operational, the cloud-based platform utilized with the UAS will allow multiple users to access and use the information collected for their requirements," Dickens said.

"The UAS platform itself is modular in design that can be customized for flight controls and components," Jurena said. "The payload attachment is also customized that can accept a variety of sensors with minimal

tools and equipment modifications. In short, the UAS platform flown is adaptable to both flight components and payload attachments with minimal downtime."

As testing continues, the UAS's capabilities will continue to improve and will broaden to expand its usefulness.

"The UAS platform flown July 9 and 10 provided LiDAR data for further refinement of habitat classification that was not possible with just regular and multi-spectral imagery from last year's UAS flights," Jurena said.

Once all processes are proven, Jurena said the team's innovation will quickly be shared with others who may benefit.

"If the UAS/UAV methodology works well here, it could help other Department of Defense installations," he said. "It can provide another survey tool for USFWS and state biologists to assess this species at their refuge sites, as well as multiple other uses."

In addition, future classifications of the program's UAS could include their use for infrastructure inspections, to detect water and fuel leaks, and other routine inspections," Jurena said. "This really is a win-win for the Air Force and the Department of Defense."

ARNORTH ready to battle COVID-19 after busy spring

By Sean Kimmons
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

The head of U.S. Northern Command's land forces spoke July 14 of the lessons learned from its ongoing battle against COVID-19, as the command prepares to send more troops to hotspots in Texas and California.

At the height of its response in April, the command had more than 9,000 service members deployed across the country and has supported over 130 Federal Emergency Management Agency missions throughout it.

About one-third of those troops were medical providers who helped reduce the burden on civilian hospitals.

"It was the largest response we have commanded and controlled," said Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson, who is also the commander of U.S. Army North.

Emergency responses normally have one or two FEMA regions activated, which cover about 10 states. The response to COVID-19, however, has resulted in all 10 regions being activated, she added.

Game-changer

With cases rising in Texas and California, the command has now assigned about 740 military medical and support personnel to support FEMA missions in both states. The majority will assist hospitals in Texas such as in San Antonio, Houston and elsewhere, the general said.

"That was a game-changer for us," she said of augmenting civilian hospitals. "Let's go in where the infrastructure is and help those staffs out. That was really a lesson learned and a best practice."

Since its response began in late January, the command has created Urban Augmentation Medical Task Forces, which are comprised of 85 medical personnel.



CHIEF PETTY OFFICER BARRY RILEY

Soldiers assigned to Javits New York Medical Station conduct check-in procedures on an incoming COVID-19 patient in the facility's medical bay April 5.

Some of the specialized units earlier deployed to hospitals in New York City, the nation's former epicenter for the virus, where they helped a beleaguered staff.

The task forces and other military efforts became such a welcomed sight in the Big Apple that the mayor said they were like the cavalry, Richardson said.

"They had just about lost all hope and when our folks came [in to support] and they were integrated into the hospitals, they were cheered [on]," she said. "It was just really, really incredible."

The command, along with the Army Corps of Engineers, also helped transform the Javits Convention Center in Manhattan into an alternate care facility that treated almost 1,100 patients, many of whom

had the virus.

Army engineers then used lessons learned from that operation to build several other care facilities out of empty event centers around the country.

The command helped create strict donning and doffing procedures for personal protective equipment, or PPE. The process, she said, is similar to chemical or biological decontamination and it later became the standard for all Defense Department personnel.

"It is still key to our success in keeping our people healthy," she said.

As hurricane season approaches, when there is normally a need for high-water vehicles, the general said troops will also have high-water PPE to protect

them as they rescue people.

"We already ordered that and have it on hand [to make] sure our forces will have enough as they go around saving lives," she said.

Emergency preparedness

The general credited previous training in helping U.S. Army North, which holds about 60 exercises per year, be ready for the current operation.

In October, ARNORTH participated in Vigilant Shield, an annual homeland defense exercise that involves NORTHCOM, U.S. government agencies, and the Canadian Joint Operations Command.

"It was pretty eye-opening," she said. "So when COVID started blossoming out, it wasn't as intimidating. 'It's always good to get a harder situation or scenario in

an exercise so that when the real world happens, it's easier. That's really what we try to strive for."

ARNORTH also added 250 personnel to temporarily uplift its Joint Force Land Component Command. Those included members of warfighting and logistics teams from the Army Combined Arms Center, she said, as well as five general officers who augmented her staff.

While the peak of the operation has passed, Richardson said the command remains poised to step up and help should the need arise, or should any natural disaster occur.

"At Army North, our motto is 'Strength of the Nation' and we are working nonstop, day and night, to support our fellow Americans," she said.

JBSA recreational facilities provide safe experience

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joint Base San Antonio members who are tired of being cooped up indoors because of COVID-19 restrictions can enjoy the outdoors in a safe setting at one of several recreational facilities.

Through safeguards implemented by the 502nd Force Support Squadron, outdoor and recreational park facilities at JBSA remain open to service members, dependents, retirees and Department of Defense government civilians for their use and enjoyment.

Trever Gilman, 502nd FSS assistant community services flight chief, recreation, said several health and safety measures have been put into place at recreational facilities to protect the well-being of customers and staff members.

First, fiberglass screens have been installed to separate customers and staff members at front counters, with staff members cleaning the entrance area as customers come and go. Second, recreational equipment is being cleaned after each usage by patrons.

"We are doing daily cleaning of the equipment, especially the equipment that is going out," Gilman said. "We clean it and then we have a spot where

people can bring it back. Some of our equipment we let set for a couple of days. Our campers, for instance, we air out for three days and our staff will go out there and do the deep cleaning on it for the next customer."

At the JBSA Recreation Park at Canyon Lake, groups of up to 10 individuals are being allowed in, which includes the sponsor who must show their Department of Defense identification card. When in park areas or on the beach, groups are asked to practice social distancing from each other and wear masks or face coverings when inside park facilities, interacting with park staff members or in situations they are unable to do social distancing.

Gilman said staff members drive around the park on a regular basis to monitor and make sure guests are following social distancing guidelines. They also keep track of the number of people coming into the park at the entrance.

Anyone can check for updates or follow the JBSA-Canyon Lake Facebook page for daily updates on capacity levels at the park at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jbsa-Canyon-Lake/>.

To enhance the safety of guests, lodging facilities at JBSA-Canyon Lake are being rotated for usage. After each use, park staff members are allowing each lodge to air out for three days before it is cleaned and rented out to guests again. Gilman said this process is being

enacted to give ample time for lodge units to air out and be cleaned thoroughly, including all touching points and surfaces.

In addition, pontoon and ski boats are being thoroughly sanitized and cleaned after each use.

For information on the availability of and to make reservations at the JBSA Recreation Park at Canyon Lake, call 830-964-3576 or email: jbsalodgingres@gmail.com. Reservations for boat rentals can be made at: jbsamarinasuper@gmail.com.

Information about outdoor recreational facilities, including hours of operation and health and safety protocols, is posted at

<https://jbsatoday.com/OutdoorRecreation> and <https://jbsatoday.com/events/odr-reopenings>.

Amid the pandemic, Gilman said the 502nd FSS wants to continue to provide recreational opportunities for service members, dependents, retirees and DOD government civilians.

"We play a vital part in keeping resiliency within the JBSA community," Gilman said. "We feel like we can offer our operations and programs safely with all the guidelines that we get from public health and everything that has been vetted through the proper channels for approval to open, which gives people a chance to get out and about and enjoy the activities that they've earned being part of the military."

JBSA implements Stage 1 water conservation measures

From 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

Joint Base San Antonio will begin Stage 1 water conservation measures effective immediately.

JBSA Stage 1 water conservation measures are triggered when the 10-day average measurement at the test well at SAWS Well Head J-17 reaches amounts between and/or equal to 659 and 650 feet and/or when the Comal Springs 10-day average flow reaches amounts between and/or equal to 224 and 200 cubic feet per second.

JBSA is committed to preserving Edwards Aquifer water and preventing adverse impacts to the aquifer's endangered species and habitats.

The following water conservation activities will help to ensure an adequate supply of Edwards Aquifer water:

► Continue Stage Normal water use measures, except as noted or replaced by Stage 1 rules.

- Landscape watering with an irrigation system, sprinkler or soaker hose is allowed only once a week before 10 a.m. or after 8 p.m. on your designated watering day, as determined by your address or facility number.
- Reduce water consumption by any means available.
- New turf or landscaping may be watered as identified in Stage Normal until adequate growth is maintained.
- Privately owned vehicle washing is allowed once per week on Saturday or Sunday as long as there is no water waste. A positive shutoff nozzle must be used with hoses to prevent water waste. Don't let water run into the street.
- All swimming pools must have a minimum of 25 percent of the surface area covered with evaporation screens when not in use. Inflatable pool toys or floating decorations may be used.
- Hand watering with a handheld hose, soaker hose, drip irrigation, bucket or

STAGE 1 continues on 9

SAMHS expands COVID-19 critical care capabilities

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The San Antonio Military Health System is expanding its ability to care for critically injured and ill community members to help ease the COVID-19 burden on the local healthcare system.

Over the past week, Brooke Army Medical Center has doubled its capacity for military, veteran and civilian patients in need of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, or ECMO, treatment.

BAMC is currently providing approximately 25 percent of the city's ECMO capability, noted Air Force Col. (Dr.) Patrick Osborn, SAMHS surgeon-in-chief and BAMC's deputy commander for surgical services.

"ECMO is a last resort for the most critically ill patients with severe pulmonary disease," he said. "Whether due to COVID-19 or another condition, ECMO provides a life-support option to save lives when all other options are exhausted."

The time and labor-intensive treatment requires a highly specialized and trained team, "and is best utilized in specialized centers within a larger medical referral system," Osborn said.

In light of the COVID-19 surge, BAMC has reallocated staff and resources to increase its capacity to four patients, including civilian patients from the San Antonio area. Osborn

hopes to expand further while maintaining the ability to provide ECMO treatment to Department of Defense beneficiaries or in response to global contingencies.

Lifesaving treatment

ECMO is a heart-lung bypass system used in the intensive care unit when a patient has heart and/or lung failure, said Army Maj. (Dr.) Arthur (Randy) Mielke, assistant medical director, BAMC ECMO Service.

The ECMO machine removes blood from large central vessels in a patient's body, circulates it through an external artificial lung, oxygenates it, and delivers the blood back into the bloodstream. It essentially does the work of an injured lung and is the last line of defense against respiratory failure caused by the COVID-19 virus, Mielke explained.

"Patients with severe lung injury can have mortality rates of greater than 50 percent," he said. "ECMO has been shown to reduce this mortality down to approximately 30 to 40 percent. Functionally bypassing the lungs with an ECMO machine can provide precious time for patients to receive anti-viral treatments and heal from COVID-19 infection."

Established in October 2012, BAMC has the only adult ECMO center with full capability in the DOD and remains one of the few centers in the world with air transport capability.

While taking care of military

"We are members of this amazing community too and are absolutely committed to providing the highest-quality care in the safest way possible to our military, veteran and civilian patients. We are grateful to work and collaborate with our civilian counterparts in this city's world-class healthcare and trauma system."

Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby,
Brooke Army Medical Center commanding general

beneficiaries is BAMC's primary mission, Osborn explained, the organization is also able to support ECMO patients from the civilian population through a DOD program. The experience gained ensures the ECMO team sustains the skills required to mobilize worldwide to treat and transport patients back to BAMC.

"The sooner the patient is on ECMO and stabilized, the less time vital organs are without oxygenation or necessary blood pressure support and the quicker the recovery," said Bernadette Elliott, adult extracorporeal life support/ECMO transport program manager. The ECMO team has traveled as far as Iraq and Afghanistan to transport a service member back to BAMC, she noted.

Steadfast trauma partner

Along with ECMO care, BAMC is also taking additional civilian trauma patients to

ensure the regional trauma system remains unaffected by the pandemic, Osborn said. BAMC is one of two Level I trauma centers within the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, or STRAC, regional trauma system, and the only one of its kind in the DOD.

Alongside University Health System, BAMC provides lifesaving care to more than 4,000 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.

Last week, with the demand for COVID care increasing, BAMC began accepting additional trauma patients to help lighten the load for its Level I partner. STRAC's redistribution of high-level trauma care has been accomplished seamlessly due to the history of collaboration between the two Level I facilities, noted Air Force Lt.

Col. Valerie Sams, BAMC trauma medical director.

"We have an active and long-standing partnership with STRAC and UHS, which enables us to act as a cohesive, efficient system in times of crisis," Sams said.

About 85 percent of BAMC's trauma admissions are community members without military affiliation.

Community commitment

Along with providing ECMO treatment for San Antonio COVID-19 patients, SAMHS personnel are working diligently alongside their community counterparts to reduce the spread of COVID-19. SAMHS experts are serving as critical members of STRAC's medical leadership, the Regional Medical Operations Center and the Pandemic Medical Operations Workgroup that plan and coordinate all aspects of the region's pandemic response.

BAMC is grateful for its longstanding community partnerships, particularly during this national emergency, noted BAMC Commanding General Army Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby.

"We are members of this amazing community too and are absolutely committed to providing the highest-quality care in the safest way possible to our military, veteran and civilian patients," he said. "We are grateful to work and collaborate with our civilian counterparts in this city's world-class healthcare and trauma system."

STAGE 1

From page 8

watering can is permitted any time and any day.

► Washing impervious cover such as parking lots, driveways, streets or sidewalks is prohibited except in order to correct life, health or safety concerns.

► Irrigation of athletic fields is permitted only as required to maintain the turf viability/safety. Athletic fields

continue Stage Normal water use measures.

► Landscape on golf courses are required to follow one day per week watering

► Use of fountains, waterfalls or other aesthetic water features outdoors or indoors is prohibited unless a variance has been granted for 100 percent non-potable water use.

In Stage 1, the watering days are as follows if the address/facility number ends in 0 or 1, Monday; 2 or 3, Tuesday;

4 or 5, Wednesday; 6 or 7, Thursday; and 8 or 9, Friday.

All water restriction measures and details are listed in the JBSA Critical Period Management Plan available online at <http://www.jbsa.mil/Information/Environmental/>

JBSA personnel should not confuse the JBSA water restrictions with the SAWS restriction levels. The JBSA water restrictions are more stringent and begin sooner than SAWS restrictions.

These water conservation activities will help to ensure an adequate supply of Edwards Aquifer water. All water restriction measures are listed in the JBSA Critical Period Management Plan available online at www.jbsa.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-130809-013.pdf.

Call 652-2392 to report water abusers. Those found not abiding with the JBSA Critical Period Management Plan may face potential disciplinary measures. Reports will remain anonymous.

USAEC ensures training during COVID-19

By Cathy Kropp

U.S. ARMY ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army Environmental Command, or USAEC, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston has been offering online courses to ensure Army environmental professionals worldwide remain trained and mission-certified during COVID-19.

Environmental work continues on Army installations to avoid non-compliance, violations and penalties associated with more than 100 environmental laws, statutes and executive orders.

Keeping up to date on certifications and environmental requirements is a constant challenge made even more difficult when health protection measures are in place that limit travel and therefore training opportunities.

The USAEC's workforce development, or WFD, team routinely looks for ways to

improve the environmental training program to ensure it meets the needs of environmental professionals throughout the Army.

Surveys of garrison environmental professionals showed there was a consistent percentage of staff that just could not break away from their location to travel for training.

Typically, the demands of the job were cited as the reason. All this, plus budget cuts and travel budget caps, had the WFD team looking for solutions to minimize environmental training travel and costs.

The USAEC WFD team purchased licenses for Adobe Connect online hosting service and began transitioning USAEC-provided training to distance learning in 2019.

"What we set out to do was modernize and expand our reach through distance learning," said Amanda Kraus, the USAEC's Workforce Development team lead and Adobe Connect coordinator.

Distance learning-enabled courses to be broken down into smaller and often more focused pieces. Those who could not break away from work to attend a five-day course, find multiple smaller distance learning alternatives more appealing.

"At the end of the day, distance learning allows us to reach a much bigger percentage of our population," said Dave Giffin, U.S. Army Installation Management Command's G-4 Environmental Division chief.

"We began switching to distance learning where possible more than a year ago to reduce travel costs associated with training so the Army could better fund its modernization efforts," Giffin said. "That early transition really set us up for success and allowed us to continue to train our environmental staffs across the globe during COVID-19."

"Our distance learning efforts have been tested by recent events and far surpassed goals for this year with more to

come," Kraus said. "The online platform allows us to offer live, and with recording features, on-demand training that learners can access from any internet-enabled device wherever they are in the world from home or workplace."

The USAEC is the Army's program manager for the environmental restoration program known as cleanup. Since some training courses were developed by USAEC staff, the cleanup program management training, environmental and disposal liabilities course, and Army Environmental System training for reporting cleanup status and costs to complete were the first courses to transition to the new platform.

Since then, the WFD team has worked with other contracted training providers to plan and prepare more environmental training for the distance learning platform.

In 2018, one distance learning class was held. In 2019, that

number grew to five. In 2020, the team had initially scheduled 19 distance learning and 41 onsite courses.

With travel restrictions in place because of COVID-19, distance learning classes became the only available source of training and since March 17, AEC has scheduled and conducted 40 distance learning courses. Seventeen more are planned through September in response to continued travel restrictions.

"COVID-19 became a forcing function to ramp up our distance learning portfolio," said Janet Kim, AEC's deputy to the commander. "While distance learning is a great alternative, for now, there are cases where in-person instruction is most effective. Once personnel are allowed to travel, we plan to balance the training catalog between distance learning and in-person classes to provide the most effective learning environment for our workforce."

ARMY NORTH HOSTS HURRICANE REHEARSAL OF CONCEPT DRILL

U.S. Army North hosted a Hurricane Rehearsal of Concept Drill at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 10, both in-person and virtually, with more than 250 leaders from federal, state, U.S. territories and the military, to discuss their respective courses of action in the event of a hurricane response. As the peak months of the Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico hurricane season draw near, the necessary forces need to be ready to respond. The Rehearsal of Concept Drill was organized by U.S. Army North, the Army component of U.S. Northern Command, as part of its mission to support civil authorities during disasters.



SGT. MAJ. FAITH LAUGHTER

LACKLAND

‘Being an MTI is everything and nothing you ever thought’

By Debbie Gildea

340TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

After more than a dozen years as a 433rd Training Squadron military training instructor at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Reserve Citizen Airman Senior Master Sgt. Jason Wagner is moving on.

Conflicted, he's excited about a new opportunity at a new base and a new career field (as well as promotion to chief master sergeant), but reluctant to leave a team he helped develop, a unit where he's grown as a leader, teammates who are more than family, and the excitement and satisfaction of preparing Air Force trainees for the greatest “job” they'll ever have.

Wagner, who grew up in an Air Force family, lived in California, Kansas, Germany, and Canada and developed a passion for learning about and getting to know and understand people from every walk of life. It's a passion that would stand him in good stead throughout his career.

The former security forces Airman committed to the Air Force while a junior in high school, and the Friday before Sept. 11, 2001, he received his first official orders. Tuesday, 9/11, the terrorist attacks drove him to try to accelerate his report date.

“I know I annoyed my recruiter, trying to get him to move my entry date up,” Wagner said. “I took my exams early, completed all graduation requirements early. People asked me if I still planned to go. Of course, I was still going, but the ‘why’ changed.”

Reflecting on his career, he mused how 9/11 changed everything he and his peers expected their careers to be, drawing a parallel to how the



DEBBIE GILDEA

Senior Master Sgt. Jason Wagner (at right in front), Reserve military training instructor, marches his final flight toward the ‘bomb run’ at the Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland basic military training parade ground, where graduations normally occur.

COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything his sister, who graduated from high school this year, and her peers expected adult life to be like.

At some point, significant events are going to intrude on your plans, though, so he encourages others to be open to opportunities inherent in those events — and, in fact, accepted that guidance from his own mentors on more than one occasion.

Becoming an MTI wasn't part of his original plan, but his career was marked by unexpected situations that ultimately brought him to this time and place.

After completing security forces tech training, he and one other graduate didn't have orders. After waiting forever (it seemed), personnel contacted them to find out who they were and why they were using a meal card in the dining facility every day. Somewhere along the way, their records - every document - went missing.

The result was a new base for Wagner, who had been scheduled for Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. His new

assignment was Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, where he spent six years, including three deployments.

Every effort to get a permanent change of station from Cannon to anywhere was unsuccessful, and after six years of long “cop” hours and three major deployments, with no end in sight, Wagner and his family decided it was time to separate from the Air Force.

Both he and his wife were teaching for a living when she was diagnosed with a brain tumor. After she spent six weeks in intensive care, he realized that they were not going to make it.

In 2009, Wagner accepted an Active Guard Reserve military training instructor position at the 433rd. It wasn't part of his plan, but he embraced the opportunity, and the result was more emotional and mental growth than he could have anticipated.

Reserve service represented the opportunity to stay in place long enough to put down roots and spend time with family.

“Dad was my biggest fan,” he said. “He was more excited

about every success than I was, and he posted videos and pictures of everything I did.”

Although his dad passed away two years ago, he saw Wagner earn his training instructor badge and hat, watched him march countless flights across the bomb run, celebrated his promotions and revealed when his son was welcomed into the exclusive Master Military Instructor “Blue Rope” Association.

Not all experiences were positive, but those that were not still brought opportunity, education and experience.

In 2012, as Wagner approached the end of the traditional four-year special duty tour, he faced a dilemma. He could go, as eventually, all must, or he could stay and try to be part of a cultural transformation in the enlisted training environment.

“There was a growing number of us who didn't agree with the idea that you have to treat people as if they're subhuman,” he said. “There was an entrenched toxic culture, I had a chance to be part of reimagining basic military

training, and I wanted to stay.”

While working with like-minded members to heal the BMT culture and create a growth environment, Wagner also did an internship with a local behavior analysis unit, which helped him complete his bachelor's degree in psychology, and helped him sort out his thoughts on the problems he had seen in BMT.

Having been part of improving the culture, and with two tours behind him, Wagner was ready to move on. Unfortunately, an enlisted member with a 7-level in his or her field automatically drops to a 3-level after six years out of the field.

Regular Air Force (active duty) members rarely face that situation because they are limited by automatic personnel systems to the four-year tour (with extension possible for some), followed by an Air Force-directed move.

“We don't have a mechanism to automatically pull a member out of the MTI special duty, so you have to aggressively manage your career and have a plan for your next position,” Wagner said. “As a master, I applied for six security forces units, but it was too late — with a 3-level, I was no longer eligible.”

It isn't easy to walk away from a job you love, Wagner knows.

“Special duties — MTI, first sergeant — are supposed to be special. You will miss out on so many other opportunities if you try to turn a special duty into a whole career,” he cautioned.

Wagner encourages those considering applying for MTI duty to do it.

“What we get to do here, we will look back on it fondly for

AFSFC launches software to monitor health of MWDs

By Rachel Kersey
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Air Force Security Forces Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland has officially launched the Kennel Health Assessment 2.0 project to ascertain the holistic state of all of the kennels across the U.S. Air Force and ensure the well-being of all Military Working Dogs.

The project was started in 2018 as KHA 1.0 by Master Sgt. Steven Kaun, the current Air Force MWD program manager.

It had the basic bones of the current project, including the need to track the status of each individual kennel, but because of competing priorities, KHA had to take a backseat. It was revived again when AFSFC and Air Staff leadership recognized the need for this information. In this second iteration, they devised a way to assign a grade to each kennel in the Air Force system.

"This is instrumental in our ability to communicate to senior leaders and key decision-makers the data they need to make the most informed decisions when it comes to MWD readiness, health and its direct correlation to the MWD Kennel facilities, which house these sensitive, high-value assets," said Tech. Sgt. Otho Nugent, Air Force

MWD assistant program manager, who leads special project areas.

"Currently, there is nothing to capture the status of MWD kennels across the enterprise, and we recognize this is a problem, so we have created a comprehensive solution and the first-ever product to get after the problem," Nugent added.

The team developed a custom workbook to analyze four major focus areas — administrative offices, kennel facilities, support areas, and veterinary support. It will also analyze 10 sub-focus areas and 32 graded areas. These parameters will be used to categorize and advocate for facility enhancements and renovations to properly support more than \$116 million in MWDs.

Responses were solicited from 72 field units at permanent Air Force bases to complete the analysis. The information gathered will be compiled into a dashboard, which will show both individual and holistic kennel health across the Air Force. It is estimated that the information can be presented within 30 to 60 days to senior leaders and key decision-makers so the next steps can be taken to make any improvements necessary.

"With the proper support and funding, this product can be captured, updated and displayed in a web-controlled

database allowing for live and analyzed data," Nugent said. "Funding for this directly correlates to Air Force MWD health, safety, quality of life and overall readiness."

The product will allow decision-makers to utilize the data to invest in their home kennels and ensure they are in compliance with the standards for kennel maintenance.

Kennels must be up to standard on sanitation and preventative health measures, including food quality, waste disposal, insect and rodent control, water supply, vaccinations, training of personnel, safety measures, and more, for mission readiness.

"Most wouldn't think a kennel facility would have anything to do with readiness; however, this is inaccurate," Nugent said. "MWDs are required to be housed in these facilities, and if these conditions are poor, then the health of the MWDs housed within them will diminish."

"Ensuring our most valuable assets, people and MWDs, have the ability to perform what they have been tasked and trained to do is at the heart of readiness," Nugent said. "It is our job as an Air Force to provide these basic foundational needs for our K-9s to ensure they can perform to their max potential at a moment's notice."



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JAMES CROW

Vanda, a military working dog trainee assigned to the 341st Training Squadron, runs through a tunnel during obedience training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

To effectively track this vital information, the staff members at the Air Force Security Forces Center wants to improve on KHA 2.0 and launch a more comprehensive database application that will contain the information collected and allow owner and users in the field to update the information as needed.

Funding an owner/user compatible database would allow the Air Force to control and monitor the information through contractual agreements, business rules and

more. In the future, the team hopes to survey Readiness Training Centers and forward bases with an MWD footprint.

"In order to maintain the MWDs we have in inventory and continue to enlist MWDs into the USAF in accordance with our regulations, we need to invest our time, money, and efforts into our kennel facilities," Nugent said. "MWDs are not seen as equipment but as sensitive, high-value assets that require training, love and attention to operate at Olympic levels by skilled handlers."

BEING AN MTI

From page 11

the rest of our lives. We see 35 to 40 thousand Airmen every year, Airmen who are the perfect cross-section of America. Each one has a different reason to join, and every reason is a good reason," he said. "You could be an integral part of their career, a memory they will remember forever, and they will be a part of your Air Force legacy."

Knowing his MTI chapter was coming to a close, Wagner

wanted to push one more flight, and his final flight experience has been nearly as unconventional as his first.

As a new MTI, having completed all the training and hands-on requirements to earn his MTI hat and "cookie" (badge), he was ready for the final step: to march his graduating flight down the bomb run for the pass in review. But he didn't have a flight — they had graduated two weeks before him.

"I had to 'borrow' a flight from a teammate, and honestly,

he wasn't happy about it — he worked hard for the honor — but he knew I needed that final step," Wagner said, laughing at the memory. "He even sent me a 'motivational' message through the dorm chief."

Now Wagner's training his final flight at a time when his squadron is making Air Force history. In May, the 433rd TRS was asked to pull all Reserve MTIs out of the regular Air Force squadrons to come 'home' and push flights for the 433rd as it accepted a full share of BMT production responsibility.

But Wagner is also preparing to leave, so he's been pushing his flight while squeezing leave into the mix, and building his personal business (in real estate) before he leaves his Active Guard Reserve position in San Antonio, where he and his family have made a life, and heads for a traditional Reserve chief master sergeant position at an unfamiliar base in another state supporting an operational flying mission.

This summer, Wagner will report to the 913th Airlift Group at Little Rock Air Force Base,

Arkansas, to be the superintendent.

"To be honest, I'm terrified," he said. "But this opportunity will not come again, and I am blessed and excited to 'support the four fans of freedom.'" Being an MTI is hard. It's stressful. It's amazing. It's crazy. It will break your heart and it will fill you with joy.

"Being an MTI is everything and nothing you ever thought, all at the same time, and I would not trade the experience for anything in the world," Wagner said.

AF, Army meet numbers for basic trainees

By C. Todd Lopez

DOD NEWS

The COVID-19 pandemic hasn't put a damper on the production of new Soldiers or Airmen at basic training facilities.

Basic training throughput for the Air Force is at about 90 percent of "traditional capacity," Air Force Maj. Gen. Andrea D. Tullios, commander of Second Air Force, said during a press conference at the Pentagon July 10.

"But we are at 100 percent production for what the Air Force is asking us to produce for the end of this year," she said. "We had lowered our production to around 60 percent capacity when COVID began so that we could evaluate the ability of our trainers and the trainees to fight through. But we have since ramped back up."

Initially, the Air Force had wanted about 38,000 new recruits this year, Tullios said. But the service has reduced that to about 35,500. That, she said, is due in large part to better retention.

"We are actually retaining



VICTORIA EVANS

Soldiers in initial military training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, carry ammunition, May 11, 2020.

above historic norms," she said. "So we are going to actually hit our end-strength ceiling with our current production rate."

Army Maj. Gen. Lonnie G. Hibbard, commander of the Army Center for Initial Military Training, said the Army's recruitment and retention is similarly situated.

"Right now we're filling, as of this last week, at 90 percent fill for all three components arriving into the training base,"

he said. He also said that graduation rates for basic trainees is higher than usual — it sits now at about 92 percent.

Hibbard said the target for producing new soldiers is "in flux," for the same reason it is for the Air Force: retention is high.

"End strength is the combination of recruiting and retention and because of the current environment in the civilian sector, our retention is

also through the roof, and headquarters Department of the Army keeps adjusting our targets to keep us within guidelines of our Army end strength," he said.

Keeping airmen and soldiers safe in basic training is a priority for both services, the generals said. Testing recruits for the coronavirus when they arrive at basic training, continuous monitoring and quarantining those who test positive have ensured that training can continue and young airmen and soldiers can stay healthy.

Both the Army and the Air Force are now testing new recruits for COVID-19 upon arrival on station. Both have reported similar numbers regarding the results. About 2 percent of those new recruits test positive for COVID-19 and, of those who test positive, about 60 percent are asymptomatic. Those who test positive are moved out of training and into quarantine.

"All soldiers who screen or test positive for exposure or symptoms of the virus are quarantined and given proper

medical care, and after recovery, are cleared medically and returned to training," Hibbard said.

Tullios said the Air Force is also quarantining new recruits who test positive for COVID-19. When they are healthy again, they get back to basic training.

"Someone who tests positive when they arrive at basic training is placed into isolation," she said. "I can tell you that all of our trainees who tested positive upon arrival have recovered and then reentered into the training pipeline."

The Army has basic training facilities at Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Hibbard said that if any of those facilities reach capacity as a result of COVID-19, the Army is leveling out the training load by directing trainees to different locations.

The Air Force has historically trained new recruits at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, but as a result of COVID-19, opened a second facility at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Mississippi.

KEEPING 149TH FW HISTORY ALIVE – AND CLEAN

Tech. Sgt. Guillermo De La Cruz (right), 149th Maintenance Squadron member, and retired 149th Fighter Wing member Tech. Sgt. Dean Walden (left), wash an F-16 static display at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland July 10. De La Cruz spearheaded the project to remodel an F-16 and mount it onto a display stand in March 2016. Preserving military history is a passion for De La Cruz, and he takes time to care for all the 149th's aircraft as the wing's historical property custodian.



MASTER SGT. MINDY BLOEM

AFIMSC travel pay team adapts to customer needs

By Ed Shannon

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND
MISSION SUPPORT CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A unit focused on quick and accurate payments to Airmen turned a workplace challenge presented by the Coronavirus pandemic into an opportunity to showcase the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center's value of responsiveness.

With COVID-19 quickly impacting its base and local community, Travel Pay Processing at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, encountered a critical 24-hour deadline to develop a plan to implement social distancing measures and transition the 130-person team to telework status. The deadline forced the organization, formerly known as the Air Force Financial Services Center, to consider an approach it had never attempted and previously

believed to be impossible due to limitations in technology.

"When General Wilcox talks about doing the impossible, he brags about our team at Ellsworth because they make the impossible possible," said Linda Alcalá, AFIMSC financial operations chief.

Bob Bozarth and Teresa Stokes tackled the telework challenge head-on. They devised and implemented a plan to upgrade every laptop in the organization for access to a Virtual Private Network that was more conducive to operating the programs the team uses to process claims.

"Our biggest challenge was that we could re-image only nine of the 130 laptops per day on the network due to technical limitations, and it took two weeks to complete updates for the entire team," said Bozarth, travel pay support branch chief. "We displayed a desire to make it work and sought every avenue to find the routes to get

us teleworking."

Using a combination of split shifts and administrative leave to initially address the base and Center for Disease Control's social distancing guidance, the team reduced the number of people in the building all at one time during the two-week period, said Stokes, travel pay branch chief.

"We implemented a swing shift that, while not very popular, our team knew had to be implemented for their health because all of our people work in a cubicle environment on one floor," Stokes said. "Over the two-week period, our employees understood where we needed to go, and they embraced the situation until we could get them full-time teleworking."

Stokes said the team also remained extremely responsive to its customers during the transition, keeping up with the incoming flow of vouchers and continuing to pay customers

within five to seven days. The team processes approximately 270,000 vouchers annually.

"When we processed our first voucher from home, it was very cool and a huge victory for us because we were told for many years that we were unable to telework," said Greg Hansel, travel review chief. "Now that the number of vouchers are gradually increasing, we're going to get a good look at how successful and responsive we can be with telework."

Not only did the team successfully complete the transition, it tackled other challenges with a response-focused mindset during the pandemic by building partnerships with installations.

A DOD-directed stop movement order halted or limited permanent change of station moves and reduced the number of incoming vouchers for the team to process. With a

temporarily reduced workload, team members reached out to installation financial services offices to help them reconcile a number of vouchers that had been rejected and needed more information or documentation.

"We have mutual respect and admiration for our finance partners at the base," said Hansel, who participates in organizational roadshows designed to build working relationships with FSOs across the Air Force. "We see the pressures and additional workloads on our FSO teams, and the more we interact and understand each other, the better we work together to take care of our customers."

Working with the FSOs, the Ellsworth team helped reduce the number of rejected vouchers by 60 percent in less than six months.

"They are always willing to look into what can be done to take care of Airmen and get them paid," Alcalá said.

433rd AMXS welcomes new commander

By Senior Airman
Monet Villacorte

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Lt. Col. A. Spence Pennington assumed command of the 433rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron from Lt. Col Michael Webb during a virtual change of command ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland July 11.

Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the video-streamed event provided members of the 433rd AMXS the opportunity to be a part of the commemoration while practicing social distancing.

Lt. Col. Stuart Martin, 433rd Maintenance Group commander, presided over the ceremony.

"Never has there been a situation of such profound circumstances that has made us adapt in such a short

amount of time," Martin said. "It's a lot to balance, however, I'm 100 percent confident you're the right person to fill the commander role."

During the ceremony, Pennington expressed his gratitude to his previous unit while also pledging to accomplish his goals in his new role as the AMXS commander.

"You made my job enjoyable and meaningful. I couldn't be prouder," Pennington said of his previous command.

"Colonel McClain and Colonel Martin, thank you for having the confidence to allow me to command such an impressive and complex organization," Pennington said. "We will create an environment that is disciplined yet considerate, safe and timely. We will also focus on these three things: people, planes and processes."



Lt. Col. Stuart Martin, 433rd Maintenance Group commander, presents the guidon to Lt. Col. A. Spence Pennington, 433rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander, at a change of command ceremony for the 433rd AMXS at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland July 11.

SENIOR AIRMAN MONET VILLACORTE

RANDOLPH

Reserve squadron, American Airmen march into history

By Debbie Gildea

340TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Air Force Reserve's 433rd Training Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, marched hundreds of Total Force Air Force trainees into the history books July 16 when those trainees took their Airman's Oath during basic military training graduation and took their place in the long blue line.

The new Airmen are the first to complete basic training in the fully operational, all-Reserve military training squadron.

The 433rd TRS, one of seven squadrons assigned to the 340th Flying Training Group at JBSA-Randolph, is the only all-Reserve military training instructor squadron in the Air Force. In the past, 433rd TRS Reserve MTIs were embedded in Regular Air Force (active duty) squadrons to support the Air Education and Training Command enlisted accession mission.

In May, the squadron, supplemented by former active duty MTIs who were invited to return temporarily to MTI duty, stood up as a line squadron alongside the active duty, inviting its Reserve MTIs to return to the squadron to lead its trainees through 7.5 weeks of training. Volunteers from the 433rd Airlift Wing at JBSA-Lackland rounded out the team, serving in administrative support functions.

Surging the squadron amid a global health crisis that resulted in travel restrictions, physical distancing requirements, and personal protective equipment concerns was a challenge, said



DEBBIE GILDEA

Basic training graduates from the 433rd Training Squadron take their oath of enlistment during their July 16 graduation ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

squadron superintendent Chief Master Sgt. Tamara Strange.

"This wasn't easy, but we came away with a sense of accomplishment in overcoming anticipated and unanticipated challenges," she said. "The trainees and MTIs gave everything they had and they earned their place in history!"

In addition to smaller flights (enabling trainees to maintain necessary physical distance), most basic training processes are new or modified. When recruits arrive for training, they enter a two-week holding period, during which they are carefully assessed for any signs of illness. During those two weeks, they receive instruction on a variety of knowledge and skills, including drill and ceremony, customs and courtesies and more. They also do regular physical training.

Some aspects of BMT are delayed, though, like a practical application of uniform wear. In

the past, flights reported en masse to uniform issue. Now, to preserve physical distancing requirements, Army and Air Force Exchange Service representatives come to the unit to get trainee size information and uniforms are delivered when they're ready. Until the uniforms arrive, trainees wear physical training gear.

The traditional graduation ceremony is the most visibly obvious change. To protect Airmen, their families and staff, graduation ceremonies include individual squadrons only and are closed to the public. Ceremonies no longer include a parade and are live-streamed on Facebook so families and friends can watch.

"Trainees are generally aware that things are different, but this is 'the norm' for them — they haven't experienced anything else — so they've done fine. Our MTIs have also adapted and excelled, in spite of

countless challenges they encountered over the past seven-plus weeks," said 433rd TRS Commander Lt. Col. Anthony Erard. "They are consummate professionals and I couldn't be more proud of them!"

Although graduations are now closed to the public, ensuring trainees have a motivational send-off is important, Erard explained, so special guests are invited to speak.

The 433rd's historic graduation also featured an appropriately historic reviewing official: Col. John Thien. The first commander of the 721st Operations Group, which was activated in October 2019, accompanied by his senior enlisted leader Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Libalbert.

Also on hand to celebrate the occasion was the 340th FTG commander who is new to his role as commander, but is far

from new to the unit or its mission.

Col. Michael Vanzo, who assumed command of the 340th FTG in March, refreshed his relationship with the squadron, where he once served as the director of operations. In addition, Vanzo formerly commanded another 340th squadron, the 70th Flying Training Squadron at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and served as the group director of operations prior to his assignment with 22nd Air Force in Georgia.

"This is all about what the 340th FTG and the Reserves can do to answer our nation's call. About two months ago Col. Newsom (737th Operations Group commander) and I discussed the plan to stand up the 433rd and start 'pushing' classes independently. With Tony (Erard) and Chief (Strange) leading our exceptionally experienced MTIs and the 737th providing the resource support, I was looking at a guaranteed win. That's 'Total Force' in action and a perfect example of the flexibility we need to overcome current and future challenges in BMT. Based on the professionalism, pride and morale displayed during this ceremony, the 433rd TRS stand-up is a proven success and will continue to 'Lead' and produce exceptional Airmen," Vanzo said.

The squadron has no time to rest on its laurels, though. Tuesday, July 21, unit MTIs will welcome the next 560 recruits and will kick off another 7.5 weeks of training, education and mentoring to lead those recruits to their place in the long blue line.

Reserve MTI embraces challenges, achieves dream

By Debbie Gildea

340TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP

Tech. Sgt. Sharon Collado is a Reserve military training instructor supervisor at the 433rd Training Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. Unlike many people, she knows that she can do anything she wants to do. She's proved it to herself countless times throughout her 18 year Air Force career, but long before she enlisted, her dad, a career Air Force information manager, told her so.

Following the path he set, she joined the Air Force in 2002 to be an information manager/knowledge operations specialist and set off on a journey that led her to a variety of opportunities and challenges in a host of locations across the country, both as a Regular Air Force (active duty) and Reserve Airman, and she's not done by a long shot.

As an active duty Airman, her career included knowledge operations assignments at Florida State University's ROTC program, Maxwell Air Force Base, and Colorado Springs. It was while assigned to Maxwell that the possibility of being an MTI first occurred to her. While serving on the base honor guard, she met a former MTI whose presence lit a fire in the young Airman.

"She was so sharp, so professional and I knew, that was what I wanted to do, what I wanted to be," Collado said.

MTI duty wasn't open to junior enlisted members, though, so she tucked the goal into her list of intentions and continued to seek other career and personal challenges. One of those brought her to a major career decision point, and her decision put her on a path toward making her intention a reality.

While stationed at Peterson AFB, Colorado, she decided to focus her academic efforts on a different career field and dove into completing her nursing pre-requisites. When she was accepted into the full-time University of Colorado nursing program, she had 13 years of service behind her. Walking away from the service she loved, especially with so many years on the books, was a tough call, but the need to embrace this new opportunity was impossible to deny.

Fortunately, the Air Force Reserve offered the perfect solution, and a position just happened to be available at the right time, enabling her to transition



Tech. Sgt. Sharon Collado
Basic Military Training
Instructor Supervisor

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DEBBIE GILDEA

Tech. Sgt. Sharon Collado, Reserve Citizen Airman, is a military training instructor supervisor assigned to the 433rd Training Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

from active duty to Reserve and accept a traditional Reserve position with the 70th Flying Training Squadron at the Air Force Academy.

That transition alone was a pretty significant challenge.

"It's a whole different ball game," she said of the move. "It's a challenge to learn — so much about being Reserve is unlike anything in the RegAF — but it's well worth it! As a Reserve member, you really have more options and the best of both civilian and military worlds."

Although she was working to become a nurse, and serving as the NCO in charge of a Reserve flying squadron support staff, she still harbored that desire to become an Air Force MTI. It was a goal that may have seemed impossible at that moment but achieving it was closer than she knew. The 70th FTS, assigned to the 340th Flying Training Group, happens to be a sister squadron to the 433rd TRS in San Antonio, which is the only all-Reserve MTI squadron in the Air Force.

As a traditional reservist, Collado didn't have a lot of interaction with other enlisted members in the group, but there is an annual enlisted conference when enlisted members from the 340th headquarters and its seven squadrons meet for professional development.

MTIs from the 433rd TRS attend that conference.

Suddenly, the path to her goal was open, and Collado faced a new critical decision point. With a hard-won nursing degree in hand, she could have her pick

of countless medical opportunities and still serve as a traditional Reservist with the 70th FTS. Or, she could take another risk, embrace another challenge, and pursue that intention that took root in her young Airman heart.

Collado completed MTI training in August 2018.

As a new MTI, she attacked every challenge with the same fervor that she had pursued every goal throughout her career.

"It bothered me to not be a subject matter expert, so I did what I had to do to be the subject matter expert and to excel," she explained.

As a result of her determination and exceptional performance, with less than two years in the special duty, she was promoted to the MTI supervisor position she currently holds.

It comes with challenges too, and she's embraced them as the price of improving, growing and becoming the subject matter expert.

She'll need to hurry, though, if she wants to master every MTI supervisor duty and skill, because she's moving again.

As a young administrative specialist, her earliest career goal was to become a group or wing executive staff member. Her superintendent at the 433rd, Chief Master Sgt. Tamara Strange, knew about her dream and when the 22nd Air Force command chief enlisted executive position was announced, Strange encouraged Collado to apply.

She applied but really didn't think

anything would come of it and was completely stunned when Chief Master Sgt. Imelda Johnson, 22nd Air Force Command Chief, emailed to invite her to interview.

"I was so nervous! I tried to be confident and show 'me,' but I didn't think I did well. I told Chief Strange afterward, 'Well, I guess you'll have me for another year,'" Collado said.

June 2, in the midst of utter chaos supervising a melting pot of active duty and Reserve MTIs who were pushing hundreds of trainees through BMT in the middle of a pandemic that wreaked havoc on every single process, Collado learned that she had been selected.

"If this isn't every dream come true, I don't know what it is! I'm so excited to go back to my original field, back to my roots," she said. "And, I'm going to get to learn from and be mentored by a strong, enlisted woman! I don't even have the words!"

Even better, she'll be going back to her career roots with another stripe on her shoulder, and the command chief has already talked with her about attending senior NCO academy in residence and advised her to start thinking about where she wants to go next.

Every critical decision point contributed to Collado's journey toward her dream job, but the one that took her out of her comfort zone (and helped her prove again that she can do anything) was the decision to become an MTI.

Being an MTI isn't for everybody, but it is definitely worth considering, she believes.

"If you are interested, you should start by having a transparent conversation with the MTI recruiter here. It is an incredible opportunity, but it is also challenging, stressful and time consuming, so you have to be honest with yourself and determine if it's right for you," she advises.

It can be tempting, for some, to stay too long, as well. But that isn't the best route for the member or for the Reserve.

"After three years, you need to go back to your career field. This isn't and shouldn't be a lifelong job. Come here, become a subject matter expert, learn all you can and take that knowledge, that leadership ability back out to the field," she added. "You may not go back to the same unit you came from, but be open to whatever the future brings, and you may be surprised at how many doors will open."

Tech. Sgt. Jason Beaucage, assigned to the 341st Recruiting Squadron as the San Antonio Military Entrance Processing Station liaison supervisor, runs each day in honor of a different Air Force Recruiting Service group or squadron.



MASTER SGT. CHANCE BABIN

AF Recruiter running to educate others

By Master Sgt. Chance Babin
AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

An Air Force recruiter has devised an innovative way to educate his fellow recruiters about recruiting squadron locations around the world.

Tech. Sgt. Jason Beaucage, assigned to the 341st Recruiting Squadron as the San Antonio Military Entrance Processing Station liaison supervisor, runs each day in honor of a different Air Force Recruiting Service group or squadron. He calls it a virtual tour of AFRS.

For example, to honor the 30th RCS, he will run 3.1 miles for the day. After he runs, he posts information on the squadron, including location and leadership details, to the Recruiting Service 5/6 and the AFRS Top III Facebook pages.

Beaucage said he came up with the idea to help young

recruiters who are at their first duty station as a recruiter.

"I think it's important Tier-1 recruiters know this information because they need to know about the organization they represent," he said. "A lot of Tier-1 recruiters may not know that there are 65 MEPS and they aren't just limited to health professions or a squadron-level role. The goal is to help Tier-1 recruiters learn where they might be stationed next."

After each run, Beaucage uploads a biography of the group or squadron commander, the unit's fact sheet and other relevant information, including where the MEPS stations are for that organization.

The recruiter said in addition to helping educate young recruiters on the geography of AFRS, he has helped boost his own fitness.

"This is absolutely about self-motivation as well," he said. "Since I am posting this daily, my expectation is to continue to run daily until I have finished with all the squadrons. By the time I am done, I will have run about 130 miles. Since a lot of us aren't able to get out much for physical fitness during the COVID-19 pandemic, this holds me accountable. Who knows, it might motivate someone else to get out and run as well."

Since starting this program in early July, Beaucage has run about 40 miles. He said he doesn't even know if his leadership is aware of what he is doing, but he hopes he can help young recruiters.

"If even one person reaches out to say this helped them in any way, I will consider it a success," he said.

AETC Spark Tank 2021 submission window open through Oct. 16

By Dan Hawkins
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Air Education and Training Command's Spark Tank 2021 submission window is now open and Airmen with innovative ideas that can help the U.S. Air Force sustain a competitive advantage are welcome to submit.

From now until midnight Oct. 16, 2020, all AETC Airmen are encouraged to submit ideas they believe may make significant impacts on Air Force missions within six to 24 months. Spark Tank ideas must be submitted using the U.S. Air Force Ideation Platform at <https://usaf.ideascalegov.com/>.

"Innovation is at the core of how AETC executes force development for the Air Force," said Col. William Mamourieh, HQ AETC's Director of Analysis and

Innovation (A9). "We know AETC Airmen are doing amazing and creative things to improve mission capabilities. The Spark Tank competition is a great way to share those good news stories with the rest of Air Force, and to potentially get resources to turn those ideas into reality"

Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, the AETC Commander, will chair the command's judging panel that will review submissions and choose the top five entries. Those five individuals/teams will then have the opportunity to virtually pitch their idea to the AETC selection committee. Two will be selected to represent the First Command at the Air Force-level semi-finalist competition.

Winners at the semi-finals move on to the final round of competition, which is scheduled to be held at the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium in

Orlando, Florida, Feb. 24-26, 2021.

This is another exciting opportunity for innovative AETC Airmen to showcase their skills and create new ways to improve AETC and AF operations. AETC Airmen from the 56 Operations Support Squadron at Luke AFB shared the top prize with a team from USAF in last year's AF-level competition. The AETC team created a low-cost, mobile threat emitter system to be used in training for fifth-generation aircraft.

"The Luke team's success is a fantastic model for today's AETC Airmen," Mamourieh said. "Your ideas matter to our most senior leaders, and this is your chance to put those ideas on the table. We're counting on AETC Airmen to get into the competition and we hope to give the commander a large pool of innovative ideas to pick from."



COURTESY GRAPHIC

Mr. Brian Marchitello from the HQ AETC/A9 directorate is the lead action officer for AETC Spark Tank 2021. For more information or

assistance, Airmen can email the HQ AETC/A9A Innovation Advancement Division workflow at aetc.a9a.workflow.2@us.af.mil.