

# JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

AUGUST 14, 2020



LT. COL. MARTIN O'DONNELL

*Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris, the Adjutant General of Texas (left), talks with U.S. Army North Commanding General, Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson (right), during a visit to the Texas State Operations Center in Austin, Texas, July 16.*

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# Commentary: Listening and leadership can save lives

By Rebecca Ward

OFFICE OF INTEGRATED RESILIENCE

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Rakowski knows what it's like to lose a friend to suicide and never wants to experience it again. In 2012, a friend who had recently separated from the Army died by suicide.

Rakowski saw firsthand how the Soldier's death so deeply affected those around him — his family, his friends and Rakowski himself. At the time, Rakowski said, neither he nor other acquaintances had asked their friend about his mental state.

Four years after his Army friend died, Rakowski had an opportunity to intervene with another friend, this time a fellow Airman, who was struggling with depression and suicidal ideation.

"Stephen and I were Airmen together. I was a Senior Airman when he first got in. We worked together and developed a mentor/mentee role during that time."

After making Staff Sergeant, Rakowski deployed and then returned to his installation to become Stephen's supervisor. Since he already had a rapport with the Airman, the transition from peer to supervisor was somewhat easy. He was also able to recognize when the Airman's behavior and demeanor began to change, which it did soon after Rakowski's return.

"It started out the typical route. There were a couple of identifying attributes that something was wrong. He was showing up to work late, just a couple of minutes, and wasn't being himself. It wasn't like he became a poor performer or anything. He was still getting his work done. There was just something that was a little bit off," Rakowski said.

Rakowski stayed engaged with his Airman but said it was still very difficult to ask what he described as that very awkward question. The slight infractions and differences in behavior

seemed minor at the time but got progressively worse. Finally, after a week of repeated lateness, Rakowski pulled him aside for a more frank discussion.

"There was a lot of dancing around subjects, trying to avoid it until we got to — well are you depressed? Once I finally asked the question, he was able to open up to me," Rakowski said.

After talking with his supervisor, they came up with a plan of action for the Airman which included walking him to the Chaplain's office.

"I went over to the chapel with him and basically let him know he wasn't going to go through any of this alone. I walked him in there and sat outside and waited for him," Rakowski said.

Despite these efforts and the support of his immediate leadership, Stephen continued to struggle with depression over the next several months. Rakowski recognized he needed further help, but both he and Stephen worried about perceived negative consequences from going to the mental health clinic.

Rakowski readily admits he didn't fully understand the process at the time — nor did Rakowski's supervisor. But the decision to get his Airman to mental health was finally made for him when he found Stephen in his garage, firearm in hand.

"We had the benefit of living on the same street in base housing. It was after work one day and there was just something wrong. Something just didn't seem right. It wasn't settling well," Rakowski said.

So Rakowski spoke with another staff sergeant who was a good friend of Stephen's and had also been helping him through his depression. They both agreed something didn't seem right.

"I tried to call him — he didn't answer and that was a little weird because like I said it was the end of the duty day. We left work at the same time, we live in the same area. And so I just

ended up going over to his house," Rakowski said.

Rakowski found his Airman perhaps just moments before he would try to take his own life. By the Airman's own admission, he had planned the suicide a couple of weeks in advance.

"I found him there. We talked. There were some tears shed, I think, all around. And that's when we had the conversation where I basically told him we need more help. And it was a 'we' thing like I can't help you any further on my own or with my supervisor. We decided to make that phone call," Rakowski said.

That was a turning point for both men. Rakowski said he had reached the conclusion that if he didn't help, then who would, and would it be in time? Rakowski said he asked himself those questions for a while, and regrets not acting sooner to get Stephen the mental health services he needed.

"I can readily admit I put off asking if he was depressed before the day where he really was going to go through with the suicidal ideations," Rakowski said.

As a friend and supervisor, Rakowski said he was afraid there would be no turning back after having the tough conversation. Would his Airman continue to trust him? The alternative might be worse. He'd already lost one friend to suicide.

"I didn't want to miss something wrong, either. It goes back to when a really good friend of mine took his life," Rakowski said.

Before his Army friend's death, questions over depression and mental health never came up. Now, Rakowski says he finds it easier to have early interventions with people, having more open conversations and talking about their feelings.

"I think most people at certain points in their life have some sort of, at least, mild depression where they are just not motivated or something goes wrong in life and they don't

know how to handle it. Now I can express to people that I've been with people who have been there. We can talk about these things," Rakowski said.

Although he's now comfortable referring resources to his Airmen, including mental health, Rakowski said there's always room for improvement.

"I think we've seen with the uptick in suicides in 2019, there's never a point where we can rest with this. And I think it's also hard because every few years we're dealing with a culture change with who is going to be coming into the Air Force and how were they raised differently. So what worked for me when I came in ten years ago is not going to work for someone who I'm now bringing in ten years later," Rakowski said,

Rakowski said leaders need to be open-minded when it comes to being able to identify with people and help close the gaps of communication. Despite the current pandemic, heart to heart talks can still take place by phone or video chats.

"It's just so easy to hide raw emotions," Rakowski said.

"It's not until we actually sit somebody down for a long period of time and get more of an interpersonal relationship developed that we can find that."

Rakowski said the biggest takeaway for him is that it's never going to be perfect. Build trust, talk to people, bring people in, and don't try to shoulder everything yourself. It's a lesson Rakowski learned the hard way and now hopes to help others learn the same lesson before they actually need it.

*If you or someone you know is in distress, look to the Resources Matrix on the Resilience website (<https://www.resilience.af.mil/prevention-tools/>) to help you find appropriate support, or contact Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647. In an emergency, call 911 or the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.*

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

**Q. I saw a "Come and Take it" flag (one with the cannon) displayed at JBSA-Randolph and I thought all unauthorized banners like this were no longer allowed. Is this one being authorized?**

**A.** Thank you for your question. The Secretary of Defense's July 16, 2020 memorandum, entitled "Public Display or Depiction of Flags in the Department of Defense" defines which flags are appropriate for public display on military installations.

We appreciate you alerting the command to the potential presence of a publicly displayed prohibited flag at JBSA-Randolph. We are working with Hunt Housing Office and the Randolph Executive Agent to ensure all flags displayed publically are flown in accordance with the military imperatives of good order and discipline, support the principle that all people are treated with dignity and respect, and reject divisive symbols.

**Q. Why are all the medicine refills only being filled at the main hospital pharmacy at the Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center now? This seems to just get more people exposed. The lines are all the way down the atrium of the hospital and many do not follow**



COURTESY GRAPHIC

**the 6-foot social distancing guidelines, because people like to talk to others etc.**

**The satellite refill pharmacy was organized and so much easier for the elderly that have trouble walking from the parking lot into the hospital and then standing sometimes for an hour.**

**I appreciate the fact that we do have the privilege of getting our medicines refilled. The drive-through pickup worked great. Please consider either opening the satellite pharmacy back up, even if it is only on certain days if there is a shortage of personnel or the drive through.**

**Thank you for checking to see if we can get improved pharmacy services.**

**A.** We appreciate your feedback. Many things were considered before closing the satellite pharmacy and several process improvements have been implemented to address the feedback from patients.

1. Change in HPCON to Charlie: Limit staff exposure/risk (staggered shifts/split staff)

2. Small Satellite lobby

3. Weather (sun/rain) — exposure to patients standing outside with no air conditioning, no tent, rain flooding the entrance

WHASC clinic patients lining up in the atrium are not exposed to extreme weather elements and are in an air-conditioned building. Additional social distancing guideline placards will also be placed in the area.

While the pick-up line may appear long, it moves very rapidly. Patients should not be waiting an hour in the pick-up line.

Here is some additional information that may help patients have a better pharmacy experience:

► The pharmacy is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Try to avoid Fridays and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays, as the pharmacy is minimally manned due to lunch rotation.

► If your doctor has called in your prescription, it will not be ready until you activate it. To activate the prescription call the pharmacy at 210-292-7970 or fill out a drop-off form and place in the box at

pharmacy lobby or at the tent table in front of the building next to entrance A.

These suggestions will improve patient experience to the pharmacy and minimize unnecessary wait times. Again, we appreciate your feedback.

**Q. Are retirees allowed on base to go to the commissary, Base Exchange, gas station, etc.?**

**A.** Thank you for your service! Right now, the base is in HPCON Charlie and is only open to mission essential and mission critical personnel.

Base access is currently limited to military members, civilian employees and other DOD-affiliated personnel such as retirees, dependents and contractors who are conducting official duties or business or have appointments at a medical or a mission support facility including the pharmacy, along with complimentary access to the BX/commissary before or after completing their business.

Access also includes everyone who currently lives in base housing who will continue to be allowed on base.

# Brown installed as 22nd Air Force Chief of Staff

By Charles Pope

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Proclaiming himself “proud, yet humbled,” Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. was officially installed Aug. 6 as the Air Force’s 22nd Chief of Staff, becoming the first African American in history to lead a military service as its highest-ranking officer.

In remarks following the formal “Change of Responsibility” ceremony in which he took over from retiring Gen. David L. Goldfein, the 21st Chief of Staff, Brown acknowledged an array of people who influenced his life. Among them were his wife, Sharene, and his parents, as well as a list of Air Force colleagues, including Goldfein and other “extraordinary leaders.”

Yet, cognizant of the moment in history, Brown also noted, “Today is possible due to the perseverance of those who went before me serving as an inspiration to me and many others.

“Those like the Tuskegee Airmen, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., Chappie James, African American leaders across our Air Force and military, past and present, to include today’s special guest, Ed Dwight, America’s first African astronaut candidate,” he said.

“It is due to their trials and tribulations in breaking barriers that I can address you today as the Air Force Chief of Staff.”

Brown, who previously served as commander of Pacific Air Forces, was elevated to his new assignment during a solemn, socially distanced, 90-minute ceremony that focused on his achievements while also honoring Goldfein’s 37-year service in the Air Force and his four years as chief of staff.

Among those paying tribute were Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Department of the Air Force Secretary Barbara



WAYNE CLARK

Secretary of the Air Force Barbara M. Barrett (left) administers the oath of office to incoming Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. (right) during the CSAF Transfer of Responsibility ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Aug. 6.

Barrett, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley. The ceremony also honored Goldfein as Esper presented him with the Defense Distinguished Service Medal.

Esper honored Dawn Goldfein as well, presenting her with the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award.

“Gen. Goldfein, Dave, our Airmen thrive in today’s environment because of your strong leadership and your steadfast commitment to upholding the core values of the Air Force — integrity, service, and excellence, each and every day,” Esper said. “The United States of America is safer because of you. Thank you for your lifetime of service to our great nation.”

Moments later in remarks to the new Chief of Staff, Esper said, “In returning to the Pentagon, Gen. Brown brings with him more than 35 years of service distinguished by a depth of expertise and experience that makes him exceptionally qualified to be our nation’s next

Air Force Chief of Staff.

“I am confident you will take the Air Force to greater heights and I’m excited to watch you lead.”

In her remarks, Barrett offered similar praise for Goldfein’s service and accomplishments. Like others, she expressed confidence that Brown has the correct mix of experience and temperament to lead the Air Force to a bright and dominant future.

Brown, she said, “brings a wealth of joint leadership experiences and global perspectives to his new role as 22nd chief of staff of the Air Force. Embodying the Air Force core values of integrity, service before self, and excellence in all we do, General Brown has the right character, experience, and perspective to lead the United States Air Force.”

Like Goldfein and those who came before, Brown as chief of staff is responsible for ensuring the Air Force is trained, ready and equipped to accomplish any mission at any time.

Yet he’s also taking the reins

of an Air Force in transition, one moving from a decades-long priority on combating and containing terrorism to a new era of Great Power Competition. As part of that new focus, the Air Force and the entire U.S. military must be trained, ready and properly equipped to confront, deter and if necessary, defeat, challenges from Russia and China. It also comes at a time of heightened challenges from North Korea and other geopolitical shifts across Asia.

In his remarks, Brown said he would work to build on Goldfein’s accomplishments while also adding his own imprint to assure that the Air Force remains the most advanced, professional and lethal in the world.

“I am committed to addressing today’s challenges while preparing for the future so we can better compete, deter, and win,” he said, surrounded by an unmistakable lineage of historic aircraft, including a gleaming chrome-plated P-51 Mustang, a fifth-generation F-35 Lightning II and an HH-60G

Pave Hawk helicopter.

“To do so, we must no longer defer, but must accelerate the needed change and tough choices we’ve often discussed. We must develop and empower leaders and provide the quality service and quality of life where our Airmen and families can reach their full potential,” he said.

Adding a dose of realism, Brown said, “No doubt there are challenges ahead that will be difficult, but not impossible. I look forward to working with the Joint Chiefs, providing our best military advice to address challenges the joint force faces today and will face in the future.”

As he noted in March when he was nominated to be chief of staff, Brown said again that he will continue to be guided by what he described as his “four tenets” of leadership — execute at a high standard; be disciplined in execution; pay attention to the details, and have fun.

In his farewell remarks, Goldfein like Brown listed those who influenced and shaped his career. Among others, he singled out Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Kaleth O. Wright, calling him his “wingman.”

“Of all the decisions I made as chief, the best by far was hiring Chief Wright,” he said.

Goldfein also thanked his wife, Dawn, saying it was a “blessing” to have her “side by side” with him for his entire Air Force journey.

“For the past 37 years, she adjusted her dreams so I could follow mine,” he said.

Then, to Brown, Goldfein said, “As I took the chiefs walk for the final time (on Aug. 5), I could not be prouder that a true warrior, leader and personal friend will be taking his first walk of the chief tomorrow as chief of staff of the Air Force.

“Congratulations to both of you,” Goldfein said. “The future of our Air Force has never looked brighter!”



# Building strong relationships: Resources available to military couples

## From Military One Source

The stress brought on by the coronavirus pandemic presents challenges for everyone and may affect relationships. This can be especially true of intimate partner relationships.

Stress may come from couples spending more time together due to stay-at-home orders. Being separated due to travel restrictions can also cause stress.

It's normal to go through ups and downs in your relationship. But if you are feeling frustrated or tense, it's important to know you are not alone. Military OneSource offers a variety of virtual relationship resources that can help.

Take time to see if they are right for you, and share them with others who may benefit from them.

## Strengthen your bond with your partner from home

There are a variety of counseling options and tools available to help military couples work through the stress brought on by the pandemic. Take advantage of these resources through

Military OneSource and Military Community and Family Policy:

► Receive coaching sessions, practical tools, resources and problem-solving techniques through the Building Healthy Relationships specialty consultation. This resource from Military OneSource helps you deepen relationships with family, friends and others through an education-based consultation. Meetings are designed to be flexible and personable. They are available to you by phone or video.

► Talk through your situation or concerns by accessing confidential, non-medical counseling services through Military OneSource via telephone and video sessions.

► Access counseling via telephone and video sessions and webinars through the Military and Family Life Counseling Program.

► Develop and practice good communication through Love Every Day, an interactive digital tool. Love Every Day is a fun and text message-based way that helps you improve relationship communication in only a few minutes each day.

► Check out these webinars that address relationships. One even zeros in on dual-military couples.

► Meet with a FOCUS provider along with your partner or spouse through video teleconference as part of FOCUS and TeleFocus Services.

## Tips for couples to manage relationship stress

Military OneSource offers tips for couples to help them cope with the stress and pressure brought on by the pandemic. These include:

► Come up with a plan to deal with the new normal.

► Give each other space, which could mean going to a different room, or maybe just wearing earbuds or headphones.

► Practice good communication, starting by setting aside a time to talk when you aren't too stressed.

► Check in with each other by video or phone if you are separated.

► Find time to be active by building physical activity into your day. Try a personal health and wellness coach or even a mobile coach.

► Take time to breathe, and remember

why you and your partner love each other.

Another factor regarding the stress you may feel in your relationship could be related to the stress the entire family is facing.

Above all else, when stress is high take care of yourself so you'll be there for your spouse or partner.

If your spouse or partner has made you feel unsafe, help is available through the Family Advocacy Program. Speak to a victim advocate or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 24/7, at 800-799-7233 or thehotline.org.

Stay up to date on all the latest information on COVID-19. For updates for the military community regarding the virus that causes COVID-19, view the following sites:

Visit [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov), [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), [USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov) and [Defense.gov](https://www.defense.gov).

Follow Military OneSource's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms.

Continue to visit the Coronavirus Information for Our Military Community page for updates.

Check [Move.mil](https://move.mil) for PCS-related updates.

# Army CID Cybercrime Unit warns rental scams on the rise

## From U.S. Army CIC Public Affairs

Housing rental scams are on the rise worldwide. The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, commonly known as CID, reminds the Army community to be cautious when responding to any advertisement regarding home or apartment rentals.

According to Edward Labarge, director of CID's Major Cybercrime Unit, scammers use a variety of tactics to steal people's money before the victim determines the listing is fake.

"A typical rental scam works by a property being listed at a low price, usually below market rate, to get the attention of potential renters," Labarge said. "Then the scammers will pressure the renters to pay a deposit and the first and last month's rent to secure the rental."

Army CID reports there are currently millions of fake listings for apartments, duplexes, and houses listed on classified ads and reputable rental sites worldwide. The scam is accomplished when rentals are advertised, but they do not actually exist, are no longer available, or are up for sale.

"Rental scams will be more prevalent in larger metro areas where there are a large number of real estate rentals on the market," Labarge said. "This makes it easy for these types of scams to go unnoticed due to the large volume of rentals."

Although rental scams may be targeted toward anyone seeking a rental property, military members

may be more prone to falling victim due to frequent Permanent Change of Station moves.

Labarge also said areas surrounding military installations are targeted due to competitive rental markets and service members having unique housing situations where they may not be available to view a property in person prior to arriving in the area.

Fake listings often lure victims in by offering military discounts, low rent, good neighborhoods, and great amenities.

"If a house or apartment is being listed well below market norms, there is a reason," Labarge said. "If it's too good to be true, it usually is. Also, a good telltale sign that the listing is a scam is that the landlords won't want to meet you in person or there is no screening process. Every landlord will want to make sure they meet you in person, no matter how brief since they are making a major decision to trust that you'll follow the rules of the lease."

CID officials remind the Army community, if you feel you are a victim of a rental scam, contact your local CID office or law enforcement agency as well as the Federal Trade Commission.

## Known types of rental scams:

### Hijacked Ads

Scammers use real rental ads and photos from legitimate postings to create their own fake ads.

Scammers will often use the same name as the legitimate posting and change the email address, or other contact information, to their own.

### Phantom Rentals

Scammers make fake listings using photos from properties that are not for rent, for sale, or do not exist.

## Watch for Warning Signs:

- They want you to sign or send money before you see the property.
- They want the security deposit or first month's rent before you sign the lease.
- They ask you to wire or send money through a payment app.
- They say they are out of town or out of the country.
- They are ready to make a deal with no background information.

## Protect yourself from becoming a victim of a rental scam:

- Do not rely solely on email to contact the owner and be wary of foreign telephone numbers.
- Do online research of the rental company, property address, and the owner.
- Conduct a reverse image search of the photos to see where else the images are being used.

**RENTAL SCAMS continues on 9**

# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## Guard, active duty and Reserve forces help Texas hospitals

By Robert Seyller

TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

More than 1,200 service members from the Texas National Guard and the active and reserve components of the Army, Navy and Air Force have joined forces to support Texas hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, Gov. Greg Abbott has secured a partnership between the Texas National Guard and U.S. Army North that will provide local hospitals with medical professionals from the U.S. Armed Forces.

Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, the adjutant general of Texas, welcomed the additional health care providers that will be joining a Texas Military Department response that began in March.

"By partnering with the active-duty and reserve components, we will be able to provide this much-needed support and relief to the Texas civilian health care workers who have been working tirelessly to care for the people of our great state," Norris said.

The Texas National Guard already shares a strong working relationship with U.S. Army North, she said. The San Antonio-based U.S. Army North also provides defense support of civil authorities in times of need.

Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, the commanding general of U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) and the Joint Force Land Component Command, will supply the federal forces positioned across the state.

The partnership in Texas marks the first time a major



LT. COL. MARTIN O'DONNELL

Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris, the Adjutant General of Texas (left), talks with U.S. Army North Commanding General, Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson (right), during a visit to the Texas State Operations Center in Austin, Texas, July 16.

disaster response will be led by two female commanders.

Both leaders have spent months responding to the pandemic, with Norris focused on supporting operations throughout Texas and Richardson assisting with national missions.

Heading the effort on the ground will be Texas Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Thomas Suelzer. Appointed as the dual-status commander, Suelzer will provide direction to both Texas National Guard and federal service members. The nomination and approval of the dual-status commander streamlines the process, ensuring a smoother and more effective collaboration of state and federal resources.

Suelzer said under the dual status structure, the governor

will continue leading the response with both state and federal military assets. Orders and guidance can simultaneously be received from the president.

"It is an incredible experience to work with our service members in this historic event. My position will allow for collaboration between orders directed by Governor Abbott and those by the president," Suelzer said. "I am proud to see how effortlessly our forces have integrated with each other."

Among the medical staff is Maj. Tanya Island of the 147th Medical Group, Texas Air National Guard. Island is serving as the Joint Task Force Lone Star surgeon, positioning personnel and resources across the state.

Island represents what

makes the Guard such a valuable tool for state response, leveraging both her civilian career as a nurse anesthetist and her military training to help her fellow Texans.

"This operation really opened my eyes as to how critical a role the National Guard has in this response," said Island. "Since COVID-19 began, we have coordinated over 320,000 tests, and now we are standing up teams of medical professionals to backfill civilian hospitals."

The first 12 teams will consist of 100 medical staff, including doctors, nurses, medics and health care administrators from the National Guard, active duty forces and military reservists.

Current focus areas are San Antonio, Houston, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, the Rio Grande Valley, and the Texas Coastal

**"Our Guardsmen continue to serve their neighbors and local communities months after activation. I want every Soldier, Airman and their family members to know how much their dedication means to the people of Texas."**

Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, the adjutant general of Texas

Bend. Suelzer explained the mix of metropolitan and rural response areas highlight very different ways the Texas health system is strained.

Cities like San Antonio and Houston are dealing with large populations that increase the communicability of the virus, while rural areas including the Rio Grande Valley and the Texas Coastal Bend struggle to find medical providers in the sparsely populated region.

In addition to the medical personnel mission in support of COVID-19, Guard members across Texas continue to staff mobile testing sites and decontaminate critical facilities.

"Our Guardsmen continue to serve their neighbors and local communities months after activation," said Norris. "I want every Soldier, Airman and their family members to know how much their dedication means to the people of Texas."



# JBSA schools to begin school year online

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joint Base San Antonio schools will start the first few weeks of the 2020-21 school year with remote learning before being allowed to open campuses to students under directives issued by local health authorities and the Texas Education Agency.

Students in the Fort Sam Houston and Lackland Independent School Districts are scheduled to start online instruction Aug. 17, while students in the Randolph Field Independent School District begin remote learning Aug. 24.

Since March, campuses in all three JBSA districts have been closed to students and teachers because of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic. Students completed the remainder of the 2019-20 school year with online instruction.

The JBSA school districts are following guidelines for reopening campuses established by the Texas Education Agency, or TEA, that allow districts the option of offering remote instruction for the first four weeks of the school year before transitioning to on-campus, in-person classroom instruction. Under the guidelines, districts can seek a waiver from TEA to extend remote learning for another four weeks if needed.

The earliest JBSA schools will be allowed to reopen their campuses to students is not until after Sept. 7, under a directive issued by San Antonio Metro Health, the health authority that covers the City of San Antonio and Bexar County. The directive applies to schools within the city and the county.

Only children with special needs, those who are deemed at-risk and students without resources to conduct their studies at home should go into schools and in extremely limited numbers as districts start the fall semester this month amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to guidance issued Friday by Dr. Junda Woo, medical director of the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. Even still, special needs services for the students should not involve prolonged close contact, defined by Woo as within six feet and for 15 minutes or more.

Once school campuses are permitted to reopen, parents in all JBSA school districts have the option of having their child continue online learning or start



COURTESY GRAPHIC

on-campus face-to-face classroom instruction.

If the directive from San Antonio Metro Health, which is subject to change, stands, Fort Sam Houston and Randolph Field school districts are hoping to reopen their campuses Sept. 8 for those students doing face-to-face classroom instruction, with Lackland schools planning to open campuses Sept. 14 for students choosing in-person classroom instruction.

School reopening dates could change if districts chose to extend remote learning for another four weeks as allowed by the TEA school reopening guidelines.

The JBSA school campuses will be following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on social distancing and will require students, teachers and staff members to wear face coverings, including masks and/or face shields.

In classrooms, desks will be six feet apart and students will practice social distancing in cafeterias and other public areas when possible. On school buses, bus drivers, school staff members and students will be required to wear masks.

Students who plan to attend on-campus instruction are encouraged to bring multiple masks or face coverings to school. The JBSA school districts will provide face masks and

other personal protective equipment, including face shields, to students on campus who need them.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, custodial staff members at the schools will clean and disinfect public areas and classrooms regularly, especially at the end of the school day. Buses will also be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

The JBSA school districts will also provide health screenings for students, teachers, staff members and visitors at campuses, and protocols will be in place for students in school who show symptoms of COVID-19.

For the students who will be learning remotely, JBSA school districts will provide equipment and online resources so they will have access to their lessons, whether by livestream or a recorded lesson from their teacher.

Districts will continue to provide meals for students who are learning remotely and qualify for reduced and free lunches by providing designated locations, such as schools, where meals will be available for pickup.

Under the directive from San Antonio Metro Health, school-sponsored events and extracurricular activities, including fairs, exhibitions, and academic and athletic competitions, are prohibited until school campuses are allowed to open after Sept. 7.

Dr. Gary Bates, Fort Sam Houston ISD superintendent, said the goal of the

## School Updates

Updates and information on the start of the school year at JBSA, including registration and other information about schools and COVID-19, can be found on the JBSA school district websites:

- » Lackland ISD:  
<https://www.lacklandisd.net/>
- » Fort Sam Houston:  
<https://www.fshisd.net/>
- » Randolph Field ISD:  
<https://www.rfisd.net/>

district's plans for the upcoming school year is to provide a quality education for students, whether they are learning remotely or in a classroom, while ensuring students, teachers and staff members are safe and healthy in the midst of the pandemic.

"We are looking forward to hopefully getting back to a sense of normalcy," Bates said. "We want our students back here in the district. We miss them extremely, and we're looking forward to the day when they can come back so we can see those smiling faces."

The safety of students, staff members and teachers is also a priority for Dr. Burnie Roper, Lackland ISD superintendent, as he makes plans for the start of the school year.

"In terms of safety, we are going to have all the things in place that we know of based off those CDC and local health requirements in terms of social distancing, wearing of the mask, encouraging students to wash their hands frequently, and having plenty of hand sanitizer at all of the schools; just really encouraging kids to be safe," he said.

Dr. Brian Holt, Randolph Field ISD superintendent, took over as the school district's leader July 1. He said since he has arrived teachers, students and staff members have acted exceptionally in how they have approached the start of the school year during challenging times.

"While the transition (to becoming superintendent) has been tumultuous because of COVID-19, it's been wonderful because of the people that I'm around and that I'm working with," Holt said. "I just can't say enough about the school and the willingness of people to get in there and work and make it better."

# MEDCoE employee chosen TRADOC Civilian Instructor of the Year

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

Robert “Bob” Preshong, Department of Combat Medic Training at the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, was selected as the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, or TRADOC, Civilian Instructor of the Year in a virtual ceremony held by video teleconference Aug. 6.

Maj. Gen. Dennis P. LeMaster, commanding general, U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoe, at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, presented the award on behalf of Gen. Paul E. Funk II, TRADOC commanding general.

Preshong has been teaching the Emergency Medical Technician, or EMT, portion of Advanced Individual Training 68W Combat Medics for 11 years and has been a



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

*Maj. Gen. Dennis P. LeMaster (left), commanding general of the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, presents Robert “Bob” Preshong, Department of Combat Medic Training, with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Civilian Instructor of the Year award and a letter from Gen. Paul E. Funk II, TRADOC commanding general.*

paramedic for 29 years. Prior to training at DCMT, Preshong trained medical professionals

in the United Arab Emirates for two years, and owned an ambulance company for five

years.

“I started down this path simply because I felt I could make a difference in these young folk’s lives,” Preshong said. “I continue to do this because I feel that I am making a difference, and I love what I do.”

“There is always evolution in medicine, and especially in something as dynamic as the EMT field,” he added. “There are changes yearly, and we have to adapt to those changes giving them the most up to date information.”

Preshong was by-name selected to develop a 24-hour refresher National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, or NREMT, course, the first in DCMT history. This course intended to lower attrition, potentially saving the U.S. Army approximately \$8.75 million.

He is also the chair of the DCMT modular test exam committee, which created 21

modular exams that incrementally ensure achievement of learning outcomes and progression toward full NREMT exam preparedness and success.

Preshong said his passion is producing educated and highly skilled combat medics. His students display an innate pride and skill that is developed by his extraordinary interpersonal skills.

Preshong also maintains proficient and current clinical skills by working as an EMT in his off-duty hours. This allows him to remain current in EMT doctrine, laws, and real-world ethical challenges.

In his free time, he continues to work as a paramedic and provides medical support for the National Collegiate Athletic Association Final Four Basketball Championship, the Alamo Bowl, the National Basketball Association championship series and large concerts.

## U.S. ARMY NORTH AVIATION CHIEF AWARDED ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL

*Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson (left), U.S. Army North commanding general, presents Chief Warrant Officer 4 Laura Ingraham, an aviation safety officer assigned to U.S. Army North, with the honorable Order of St. Michael bronze medal at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Aug. 4. The Order of St. Michael is an Army Aviation Association of America award presented to nominated Army aviators who make a significant contribution to their field and highly demonstrate the Army Values.*



CHARLOTTE REAVIS



# Knowledge, balancing resources vital to Army's COVID-19 efforts

By Joseph Laodan  
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

Driven by a three-phase emergency response plan, the Army has contributed in every facet of the ongoing battle against COVID-19, the service's top medical officer said July 29.

The strategic approach centers on prevention, detection and treatment, said Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle as part of the Association of the U.S. Army's Noon Report series.

U.S. Army Medical Command and the Army Public Health Center have been using the concept to guide the service's efforts, which have involved the deployment of thousands of Soldiers across the country including Urban Augmentation Medical Task Forces to the East Coast to help overtasked health care workers treat COVID-19 patients.

In the Defense Department's latest response, more than 700 medical and support troops were ordered to deploy earlier this month to augment COVID-19 efforts in Texas and California. The force includes six 85-member UAMTFs assigned to different parts of Texas.

Army researchers have also helped develop and test vaccines for the virus and the National Guard has established medical field stations, he said.

"It has been an Army response, not a medical response," Dingle said. "It's not just the medical guys ... it has



LUIS DEYA

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

been an Army operation led by the [Army] Chief of Staff [Gen. James C. McConville] and the entire Army Staff and that is what has resulted in such a remarkable response."

## Striking a balance

Knowledge has been the driving force behind preventing the virus, he said. The Army has implemented programs to educate Soldiers on how to protect against the virus, and Soldiers have trained on how to protect quarantine bubbles of the population from infection, while also keeping within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, Dingle said.

"We have been setting up not to conserve the fighting strength [of the force], in this case, but to conserve the strength of the American citizens," Dingle said.

If prevention measures cannot stop infections, the Army plan moves to the detection phase and testing stations are established at an installation. Following an outbreak or confirmation of infection, medical personnel screen each person entering a post. In April, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for instance, increased its capacity for testing to about 700 people a day following a small outbreak of cases there.

In the final phase, the Army has had a significant role in treating patients with coronavirus.

"There's a saying that you run to the sound of the guns," Dingle said. "One thing that has been admirable with Army medicine is that you had the health care worker communities, our in-tow deployable hospital centers and our field hospitals and our health care teams that have just run to the sound of this virus."

Despite taking a hit within its ranks when Soldiers deployed, Dingle credited MEDCOM commanders with managing resources and assuring each installation had enough

medical personnel available to help control the pandemic at Army installations. Like its civilian counterparts, MEDCOM also curtailed non-emergency, routine medical and dental procedures to help overburdened medical staff who were tasked with testing and prevention.

"The thing that we had to balance was we still [had] to provide the care to the beneficiary population at your post, your camp, or your station," Dingle said. "The regional commanding generals, because they have command and control over the Soldiers and the uniformed personnel within [MEDCOM], have done an exceptional job cross-leveling to ensure that the things still function in spite of losing [staff] in support of a deployment."

## Controlling the spike

Dingle said the Army has experienced a slight rise in coronavirus cases likely because of contact with the civilian population after states reopened and from resuming some operations. The surgeon general said the amount of infections remains relatively low and he credits the discipline of Army units in following physical distancing and sanitary guidelines.

"We also are experiencing a small spike, because we also have restarted the movement of our forces across the globe," Dingle said. "So there has been an impact."

## RENTAL SCAMS

From page 5

- » Ask for additional photos. The actual owner or property manager should be able to provide additional photos.
- » Compare rent amounts to other rentals in the area.
- » Take a tour, or have someone you know in the area tour for you, in person or by video.
- » Call the company to verify before

signing a lease agreement.

- » Never pay a security deposit, first month's rent, or application fee with cash, wire transfers, gift cards, prepaid cards, or payment apps because once you send it, there is no way to get your money back.
- » Obtain and review a copy of any contract prior to sending any money or providing any personal information.
- » Do not make rush decisions. Scammers will often pressure suspecting victims to complete the deal

quickly due to increased interest in the property, creating a false sense of urgency.

In addition, the Criminal Investigation Command's Major Cybercrime Unit continues to warn the Army community of ongoing Coronavirus-themed phishing attacks impersonating organizations with the end goal of stealing information and delivering malware.

Labarge said the Major Cybercrime Unit continues to "aggressively pursue

cybercriminals both domestic and abroad who target our Soldiers and their families in their online campaigns."

For more information about computer security, other computer-related scams, and to review previous cybercrime alert notices and cyber-crime prevention flyers visit the Army CID MCU website at <https://www.cid.army.mil/mcu-advisories.html>. To report a crime to Army CID, visit [www.cid.army.mil](http://www.cid.army.mil).

# BAMC offers 'last line of defense' against COVID-19

By Elaine Sanchez

BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Brooke Army Medical Center is expanding its use of a highly specialized treatment many consider the "last line of defense" for critically ill COVID-19 patients.

Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, or ECMO, is a heart-lung bypass intervention that is proving to be lifesaving for some patients with COVID-19.

"ECMO is often the last line of defense for the most critically ill patients with severe pulmonary disease," said Air Force Col. Patrick Osborn, BAMC's Deputy Commander for Surgical Services. "Whether due to COVID-19 or another condition, ECMO provides a life-support option that can potentially save lives when all other options are exhausted."

BAMC, one of the few local facilities that offer the treatment, is currently providing up to one-third of the ECMO capability for the San Antonio area's most severely ill community members, veterans and military beneficiaries suffering from the virus.

"As much as able, BAMC is easing the burden on local healthcare resources by admitting civilian ECMO patients," Osborn said.

## ECMO Explained

This treatment, which requires a multidisciplinary team of specially trained medical personnel, is used in the intensive care unit when a patient experiences heart and/or lung failure. The ECMO machine removes blood from central vessels in a patient's body, circulates it through an artificial lung, oxygenates it, and delivers the blood back into the bloodstream. In essence, it replaces the natural functions of the heart and lungs while treatments and natural healing of the affected organs take place.

"ECMO is not a treatment for



JAMES CAMILLOCCI

*Army Maj. Michal Sobieszczyk (right), staff physician, Interventional Pulmonology and Critical Care Medicine, reviews paperwork in a COVID-19 intensive care unit at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston July 17.*

any specific disease. It works by keeping critically ill patients alive and buying time for us to address their underlying condition," explained Air Force Col. Phillip Mason, Medical Director for BAMC's Adult ECMO program. "In some cases, we can reduce a patient's chance of dying from 80 to 90 percent down to 30 to 40 percent. While 30 to 40 percent is still high, it represents a significant improvement and translates into many lives saved."

Established in October 2012, BAMC has the only adult ECMO center in the Department of Defense and remains one of the few centers with global air transportable ECMO capability. The multi-service ECMO team has traveled as far as Iraq and Afghanistan to pick up service members in need of the treatment.

While taking care of military beneficiaries is BAMC's primary mission, the organization is able to support civilian ECMO

patients through a special Department of Defense program. The experience gained ensures the ECMO team sustains the skills required to mobilize worldwide to treat and transport patients back to BAMC, Osborn said.

## COVID-19 Care

Pre-COVID, BAMC typically had up to four ECMO patients at any given time due to the highly specialized personnel, training and equipment required to care for patients. In recent weeks, the hospital has expanded its capability and is treating up to nine patients at one time, most of who are battling COVID-19.

An ECMO team carefully considers the treatment after other lifesaving measures, such as oxygen therapy or a ventilator, have been exhausted.

"The vast majority of the critical care community believes that ECMO is effective as a rescue therapy for respiratory failure that does not respond to conventional therapies," Mason

noted.

BAMC is part of a multinational observational trial of ECMO's use for COVID-19 that should help to reveal evidence-based proof of the treatment's effectiveness, but that's further down the line, Mason said.

"While COVID is a complex disease affecting many organ systems, its primary manifestation is respiratory failure so there is at least some reason to believe ECMO will be effective," he said, noting the treatment is often used for other viral respiratory illnesses, such as influenza.

With the program in place for nearly a decade, BAMC's COVID team is accustomed to working closely with local hospitals in the event a patient may be a candidate for ECMO. This collaboration has stepped up in recent months, creating a larger influx of patients.

To expand capacity to meet the growing community need, BAMC called on its ECMO team

to train additional nurses and technicians on the equipment, while also leaning on personnel from the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center, which is housed in the hospital, to assist.

"With the support of the ISR we have been able to expand our ECMO capacity significantly," said Army Maj. Michal Sobieszczyk, Staff Physician, Interventional Pulmonology and Critical Care Medicine. "The BAMC and ISR bedside nurses have been instrumental in making the ECMO mission a success"

## Lifesaving Treatment

ECMO may be a last resort for COVID patients, but one that has proved lifesaving for many.

Sobieszczyk recalled one recent patient in his late 20s who was placed on ECMO two times, once for COVID-19 pneumonia, from which he recovered, and the second time for a bacterial pneumonia and sepsis.

"He required a high level of support and came close to dying several times," Sobieszczyk said. "Fortunately, he was able to be weaned off ECMO and was decannulated (tubes removed) earlier this week."

As a last-resort measure, ECMO is a high-stakes endeavor, Mason noted. "We have the highest highs and the lowest lows. But each life saved is incredibly rewarding for us, and a testament to the importance of this treatment."

ECMO is just one of the lines of defense against COVID-19, but one that BAMC is proud to offer to its beneficiaries and the community, Sobieszczyk said.

"The ECMO team is honored to support the community during this pandemic," he said. "Not only are we able to help the civilian population, but at the same time use this as an opportunity to enhance our mission readiness. It gives everyone a sense of purpose and mission, something we all strive for in the military."



# LACKLAND

## ‘This is it!’ former war refugee lives dream as Reserve Citizen Airman

By Tech. Sgt. Samantha Mathison and Tech. Sgt. Rolf Stibbe  
433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

On August 6, 1992, the United States established diplomatic relations with Bosnia-Herzegovina following its independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; however, the country was in the midst of conflict.

Tensions between Bosnia's Muslims, Croats and Serbs escalated into armed conflict early in 1992 as a result of the breakup of Yugoslavia, which began earlier in 1990.

The United States can be a land of opportunity for immigrants and refugees arriving from war-torn regions. As a result of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995, an estimated 40,000 Bosnian refugees immigrated to St. Louis, Missouri, in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Tech. Sgt. Muris Secerbegovic, 433rd Maintenance Group quality assurance inspector in the 433rd Airlift Wing here, was one of them.

Born in the city of Banja Luka, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Secerbegovic and his parents faced heightened ethnic tensions in the early 1990s when the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia disintegrated.

As an eight-year-old child, Secerbegovic said he didn't fully grasp the concept of the events unfolding around him, but he remembers watching news footage of tanks rolling in and military fighter jets in the skies.

According to Secerbegovic, his father, Mustaj, realized what was happening and in 1991 decided to relocate his wife and

child temporarily to stay with friends in Croatia and ride out the civil unrest there.

"I remember the 'straw that broke the camel's back,' so to speak, was when my father and I went to get gas," Secerbegovic said. "It was supposed to be a quick trip, but we didn't know fuel shipments had dwindled so much because of the tension. There was only one gas station selling fuel, and the line was so long it took more than two hours. That was when my father knew it was time to go."

Mustaj stayed behind for approximately eight months before joining his family in Croatia. The plan was to go back home after things settled down in the region, but unfortunately, that did not happen, Secerbegovic said.

As the Croats, Serbs and Bosnians began their open conflict during the collapse of Yugoslavia, the Secerbegovic family found themselves refugees of civil war. They decided to leave Croatia in 1992 and journeyed to the border of Austria, where they were put in a refugee camp.

"We were only there for about a month," Secerbegovic said. "There was a farmer who came by and offered his mother's house to some refugees because the camp was getting too full. We were lucky enough to be chosen to stay at that house."

The family's new home was in a town 40 miles south of Vienna called Leithaprodersdorf, Austria, where they lived for the next four years.

While living in Austria, the

family was offered the opportunity to immigrate to St. Louis, Missouri, in the United States. With the war still raging in their homeland, they decided to start the process to become U.S. citizens, according to Secerbegovic.

In 1996, the family began their journey to the United States. Secerbegovic said he remembered looking out of the window of the terminal at Frankfurt Airport, Germany, and seeing a giant, red and white Trans World Airlines Boeing 747 and thinking this was the largest jet he'd ever seen. He said this was when his fascination with aviation began.

When the family arrived at their destination, Secerbegovic said he couldn't believe he was finally in America.

"The U.S.A. was just huge," he said. "Everything was vast and grand. The highway system, with its bridges and underpasses, was impressive. The cars were huge, just like what I had seen on Bosnian and Austrian broadcasts of American television shows. Now I was sitting in one."

After graduating high school, Secerbegovic focused his dreams and ambitions on becoming an aircraft mechanic. He attained his Federal Aviation Administration Airframe and Powerplant License from Hallmark University in San Antonio, then started his aviation career at L3 Technologies, Inc. in Waco, Texas.

Secerbegovic said that one day he was working in a hangar with a canopy roof cover when he heard the sound of a Lockheed C-5A Galaxy flying overhead and watched as the



TECH. SGT. SAMANTHA MATHISON

*Tech. Sgt. Muris Secerbegovic, 433rd Maintenance Group quality assurance inspector, stands near a C-5M Super Galaxy July 22 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.*

whole hangar floor turned dark and then lit back up again.

"The aircraft's shadow blocked out the sun," he said. "I walked out to the flight line and watched the aircraft circling the airport, doing touch and go landings. Throughout my whole life, I wanted to give something back to the country, which had given me safety, freedom and endless opportunity. When I saw the C-5, I thought, 'This is it!'"

Secerbegovic joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve in 2013 as a crew chief assigned to the 433rd Airlift Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, and a few years later, he decided to quit the private sector and work in the wing full time as an Air Reserve Technician.

In his lifelong journey out of war and into a C-5 aircraft, Secerbegovic said he's learned it takes discipline, motivation, and drive to achieve a dream, especially in aviation as a member of the military.

"Work can be very hectic," he said. "As a flying crew chief, the flights can be long, and trips are more frequent than ever. I am

just blessed to have a good, strong family to back me up, and without my superiors' and mentors' encouragement, I would never have made it this far."

In January 2020, Secerbegovic was accepted for an Active Guard Reserve tour at the wing to perform quality inspector duties in aircraft maintenance and is slated to return to his ART position as crew chief after the tour ends.

Senior Master Sgt. Brian Gray, 433rd MXG QA superintendent and Secerbegovic's supervisor, said due to his past experiences, Secerbegovic views life with a different perspective than most assigned to the section.

"In the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, we find ourselves working longer days with fewer people," Gray said. "He doesn't ever seem to have a 'bad' day. Instead, he attacks any assignment or mission with a confidence and positive attitude unrivaled by most. Secerbegovic's outlook on life is contagious, and without a doubt, it increases morale."

# JBSA First Sergeant Diamond Sharp Awards

From 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

The Diamond Sharp Award is sponsored by the Joint Base San Antonio First Sergeants Council and recognizes outstanding Airmen who continually exceed the standard to meet the Air Force mission.

## Senior Airman Marrina Pedrego

Unit: 616th Operations Center

Job Title: Intelligence Analyst/Honor Guard

Senior Airman Marrina Pedrego is part of the 616th

Operations Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland as an intelligence analyst. However, she has been serving with the Joint Base San Antonio Honor Guard during the past 10 months as a guardsman and has conducted more than 100 military funeral honors. She is a fully certified guardsman trainer and has instructed



more than 16 new guardsmen thru 170 sequences and certified them in the field. She has demonstrated her esprit de corps and she epitomizes what we want when request volunteer Airman from the JBSA units.

## Airman Danielle Lowell

Unit: 75th Intelligence Squadron

Job Title: Commander Support Section Technician

Airman Danielle

Lowell has demonstrated the utmost professionalism when dealing with daily customers and base agencies when her section's manning recently decreased by 33 percent. She expertly oversaw the unit's leave program where she fast-tracked three emergency leave requests



in less than 24 hours. She also scrutinized the 2020 staff sergeant promotion testing roster and coordinated with the base testing center to solidify test dates for 12 members. Lowell also executed in-processing actions for 16 recently assigned members, matching newcomers with various program managers and liaisons.

## Senior Airman Khilesh Tumbahangphe

Unit: 502nd Communications Squadron

Job Title: Client Systems Technician

Senior Airman Khilesh Tumbahangphe's work



ethic and drive for success have been instrumental in tackling emergency maintenance on hardware and software for mission-critical devices and for distinguished visitors at the command level. Not only did he assist with the resolution of 102 computer outages, but was also vital in the

standup of the squadron's first-ever service desk. Tumbahangphe was selected as a team lead for the Windows 10 version 5.7 Standard Desktop Configuration upgrade, ensuring that JSBA was compliant with Air Force Network standards. He proved himself as a trilingual individual by passing the Defense Language Proficiency Test in both Hindi and Nepali.

## Airman 1st Class Jacqueline A. Kelley

Unit: 502nd Operations Support Squadron

Job Title: Airfield Management Operations

Coordinator

Airman 1st Class Jacqueline A. Kelley has hit the



ground running since arriving at Joint Base San Antonio, completing her Airfield Management Operations Coordinator certification in 50 percent of the allowed time, accomplishing all requirements three months early. This has allowed her to step up and provide support to all JBSA-Kelly Field mission partners, as transient

heavy aircraft operations surged 100 percent since the coronavirus pandemic began. Her professionalism and motivation solidified her being hand-selected to assist with the escort for the immersion tour of the airfield for Air Education and Training Command's new vice commander, Maj. Gen. William A. Spangenthal.

## Tech. Sgt. Stephen J. Trotter

Unit: 833rd Cyberspace Operations Squadron

Job Title: Cyber Maintenance Instructor

Tech. Sgt. Stephen J. Trotter's leadership and



expertise were recognized when he was selected to become an instructor. He ached the 67th Cyberspace Wing's first virtual Instructor Methodology Course and his presentation was so well crafted that course instructors asked for his presentation material to share as an example to future classes. After graduation, Trotter

developed vital course material to train operators on a next-generation deployable cyber defense kit the 833rd COS will use for upcoming overseas deployments. He also spearheaded the building of the squadron's first-ever training pipeline geared toward certification of cyber maintenance personnel to support Cyber National Mission Force global operations.

## Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Boquist

Unit: Air Force Services, Readiness

Job Title: Air Force Services Readiness Program

Manager

Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Boquist coordinated with three



major commands to rewrite the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's Non-Appropriated and Appropriated Funds Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures Handbook. He also teamed with vehicle support chain operations to rewrite the vehicle business rules. Boquist worked with the Air Force Honor Guard,

Air Force Mortuary Affairs Office and Air Force food operations to identify uniform and equipment requirements for funding in the modernization efforts of a combat-ready Airman initiative. Boquist also worked with the Air Force Institute of Heraldry and the Air Force Personnel Center's historian for modernization of the Prime RIBS patch and staffed the pre-approved patch to the career field manager.

DIAMOND SHARP continues on 14



# 433rd Airlift Wing welcomes Dover aircraft



TECH. SGT. IRAM CARMONA

*C-5M Super Galaxy aircraft from Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, sit among the C-5Ms assigned to Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Aug. 5.*

By Tech. Sgt. Iram Carmona

433RD AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The first of six C-5M Super Galaxy aircraft from Dover Air Force Base, Delaware arrived at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Aug. 3, 2020, to take safety precautions as Tropical Storm Isaias threatened to hit the Eastern coast.

Upon receiving word that the Dover aircraft would be inbound, the 433rd Airlift Wing's Aircraft Maintenance Squadron got ready to support the request and went to work, making room for the incoming aircraft.

"The rapid response and collaborative effort saved the Air Force millions of dollars in potential damage," said Chief Master Sgt. Timothy E. Kilford, 433rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron flight chief.

"In order to keep the aircraft in good operating condition and safe from hurricane Isaias potentially damaging them, we moved to a C-5 capable base," said 1st Lt. Christopher Mahoney, 436th Airlift Wing, copilot, Dover Air Force Base. "If we were to need any maintenance support, they're (433rd AW) used to working C-5Ms here, so it makes it a convenient location to include plenty of ramp space."

"Upon arriving here, everyone has been very helpful, has bent over backward to help, and assist us, and we're really grateful for that," said Master Sgt. George Oakley, 436th AW production superintendent.

## DIAMOND SHARP

From page 13

### Master Sgt. Christopher Cook

Unit: 2nd Air Force Technical Training Operations Center, Det. 1

Job Title: Classifications Interviewer

Master Sgt. Christopher Cook has adapted to the ever-changing COVID-19 preventative measures. He revamped the Enlisted Classifications schedule to meet mission requirements. His efforts enabled the successful telecommuting rotation for eight interviewers, allowing the classification of 500 Basic Military Training trainees every week. During this time, he implemented a



workplace move to the Pfingston Reception Center at JBSA-Lackland with zero mission impact.

### Staff Sgt. Sarah A. Banks

Unit: 802nd Security Forces Squadron

Job Title: Military Working Dog Trainer

Staff Sgt. Sarah A. Banks is positive, earnest and professional at all times. She often sought out for advice on advancing the capabilities of Military Working Dogs. Banks' high-caliber training regimen, coupled with her drive to lead, has culminated in her being selected to the 341st Dog Training School. As the primary point of contact for the Air Force



Assistance Fund campaign for the 802nd Security Forces Squadron, and even with the recent increase of COVID-19 positive cases across Texas and JBSA degrading the potential of the campaign, she continued to work tirelessly, enabling the 502nd Air Base Wing to collectively raise more than \$15,000 dollars during the pandemic.

### Airman 1st Class Kayla J. Agnew

Unit: Joint Personal Property Shipping Office

Job Title: Shipment Distribution Technician

Airman First Class Kayla Agnew has displayed impeccable customer service for 90,000 Department of Defense customers and is a vital asset to the Joint Personal Property Shipping Office. Agnew coordinated 92 outbound shipments, averaging a 0.58-day booking time, far exceeding the Department of Defense's three-business-day standard. She has vetted 75 inquiries, 16 short-fuse shipments, and facilitated 19 date-change requests. Agnew revitalized customer service telework standards by responding to 120 calls, minimizing internal transfers between sections and reducing call waiting time. She cultivated unit cohesion by conducting two virtual on-the-job training sessions for an inbound NCO.



# AF environmental programs help endangered species thrive

By Courtney Strzelczyk

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION  
SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When Erica Lee was a child, the world outside the door was the place to be.

"I would come home with bugs in my pocket and was always curious about the environmental world," Lee said. Now, as an Air Force Civil Engineer Center Support Program Manager for Eglin Air Force Base Natural Resources, Florida, she is one of many environmental professionals partnering to protect endangered species while ensuring mission success.

Through a combination of programs and partnerships with installations and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the AFCEC is helping some endangered species make a comeback. Air Force installations are home to 123 of the more than 2,000 species on the Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species list. The habitats range over nine million acres across 54 installations, said Kevin Porteck, AFCEC's Natural Resources Program manager.

"The environmental projects we fund help cultivate population growth, which allows more flexibility for the Air Force mission," Porteck said. "Our ranges are home to a diversity of wildlife, and these installations can become the last refuge for some of these species when surrounded by urban development."



COURTESY PHOTO

*From left: Erica Lee, Air Force Civil Engineer Center Support Program manager for Eglin Natural Resources, and Amanda Robydek, Leidos Environmental Scientist, hold a Kemp's Ridley sea turtle.*

For example, the Okaloosa darter fish resides primarily on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, one of the Air Force's largest and most active testing and training areas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service placed the darter on the endangered species list in 1973 after sediment from unpaved roads and uncontrolled soil erosion affected stream water quality.

"We've been implementing best management practices for managing

erosion and have the benefit of full-time advisors from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to guide us through the management of the species," said Bruce Hagedorn, 96th Civil Engineer Group Natural Resources Branch chief.

Eglin's partnership with USFWS and AFCEC helped the installation develop an integrated natural resources management plan that ensures the Air Force complies with environmental protection laws during test and training missions. The plan supports programming, budgeting and the execution of natural resources requirements including projects that conserve endangered species and provide a safe habitat, Porteck said.

Because of those efforts, the Okaloosa darter was reclassified from endangered to threatened in 2011, making it the first fish to be reclassified on Department of Defense land. The Air Force hopes that the species can be recovered to the point of being delisted in the near future.

"We want the world to know, the Air Force is a proud steward of its environment and we are thrilled to partner with countless others to help recover and take species at risk such as the darter off the threatened and endangered list," Porteck said.

The red-cockaded woodpecker also ranges across the vast Eglin training ranges, and AFCEC's Air Force Wildland Fire Branch is using

prescribed burns to protect its habitat. Overgrown vegetation adds fuel to the ecosystem, which intensifies fires and increases the risk of destruction to important natural habitats, said Michelle Steinman, Wildland Fire Branch chief.

The woodpecker was listed as an endangered species in 1970. Through a combination of conservation practices and controlled burns across nearly 140,000 acres of habitat, the partnership between AFCEC and the installation has helped increase woodpecker potential breeding pairs. The woodpecker population has increased by 42 percent from 1994 to 2001, and Eglin achieved a goal of 350 potential breeding groups in 2009.

Recovery of the woodpecker on the installation has led to increased mission flexibility and has allowed Eglin to donate woodpeckers to other populations striving for recovery. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering these positive trends in its assessment of the status of the species to either remain endangered, downlisted to threatened, or delisted, Porteck said.

For Lee, the power of partnership between installations, AFCEC and USFWS is demonstrated when sea turtles nest at Eglin each year beginning in May.

"I love being a part of initiatives because we are all coming together to protect these animals," Lee said.

## DLIELC pilots virtual training team program with Puerto Rico

By Capt. Kayshel Trudell

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE CENTER

To continue partner nation support across combatant commands and execute the global security cooperation mission amidst a global pandemic, the Defense Language Institute English Language Center piloted a one-week virtual training team program with Puerto Rico in July 2020. This VTT trail is a virtual version of DLIELC's mobile training team program lead by the International Nonresident Flight, 637th International Support Squadron.

At the start of COVID-19, DLIELC transitioned from a completely in-person schoolhouse to a fully capable distance learning facility in two weeks. VTT is yet another success story of DLIELC's creativity and ability

to adapt to accomplish the mission.

"Today's multidimensional-threat environment is a catalyst for innovative thinking and forward progress," said Col. Kouji Gillis, DLIELC commander. "The goal of this pilot was to test our current capabilities and determine the potential challenges of delivering English Language instruction in a virtual setting, a capability that was previously accomplished through the deployment of our Mobile Training Teams."

DLIELC's MTT mission paused in order to protect the health and safety of its instructors and the members located at the deployment location. Although there are no current plans to make this a permanent part of DLIELC curriculum, this pilot provided a great test of DLIELC technological reach and capability.

Puerto Rico was selected for this virtual language learning test because it is a geographically separated environment that is home to an existing DLIELC Language Training Detachment. Five instructors from DLIELC's 332nd Training Support Squadron volunteered to support INF's effort to instruct 26 students in Puerto Rico's U.S. Army Cadet Summer English Program.

"This truly was a collaborative effort across DLIELC and service branches," Gillis said.

DLIELC instructors spent a week collaborating with the LTD instructors stationed in Puerto Rico to plan effective distance lessons that correlated with on-the-ground instruction. A week later, resident instructors began their roles as primary instructors for three classes of

cadets using online platforms including Zoom, Google Classroom, Blackboard, and others.

After evaluation of the feedback provided by instructors and students, INF was able to make recommendations on best practices for the development of future VTT capabilities. Currently, DLIELC is working to identify the other candidates and students with appropriate English language training needs.

"Virtual Training Teams are still in the piloting stages but may be a viable option for how to support our partner nations across the globe long term," Gillis said. "This pilot test shows a viable hybrid distance learning option and offers workable solutions for continued safe operations in a COVID environment."



# JBSA contracting actions move at record pace

By Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When COVID-19 began affecting Joint Base San Antonio training operations in March, one of the first organizations to feel the effects was the 502nd Contracting Squadron.

As the pandemic infiltrated JBSA locations, additional supplies and services were needed quickly to keep training moving at its pre-pandemic pace.

The first priority request to JBSA's contracting unit was for cleaning services, which is accomplished through Blanket Purchase Agreements, or BPAs.

"The 502nd Contracting Squadron awarded four BPAs in support of JBSA for deep and enhanced cleaning services related to COVID-19," said Cynthia Forbis, flight chief for the 502nd Contracting Squadron's Infrastructure Acquisition Flight. "The contractors selected through the agreements were required to perform in accordance with the Center for Disease Control's recommendations for facilities with suspected or confirmed coronavirus disease."

The process of awarding cleaning the initial contracts happened quickly to support training and other missions across JBSA.

"We received the request for the BPAs from 502nd Civil Engineer Squadron on March 18 and the awards were made March 20," Forbis said. "The services that continue to be provided by the cleaning contractors are vital in allowing employees to return to work in a clean and safe environment."

Cleaning contracts were not the only rush purchases coordinated by contracting personnel.

"At the onset of COVID-19 affecting the health and welfare of new Basic Military Training



JOHNNY SALLDIVAR

*Air Force Basic Training Airmen receive meals in one of Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland's dining facilities May 21.*

recruits, an alternate location for training was established at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, to help meet physical distancing requirements," said Robert De La Rosa, section chief and contracting officer for the 502nd Contracting Squadron's Infrastructure and Installation Acquisition Flight. "Rather than the contracting office at Keesler Air Force Base purchasing dormitory furniture, the decision was made to keep uniformity and the same level of specifications as JBSA-Lackland, so we relocated new furniture which had just arrived at JBSA-Lackland to Keesler."

As a result, a new contract will be established to replace the 1,200 sets of furniture that made its way to Mississippi, and should be awarded within a few weeks.

De La Rosa said a plus side of the pandemic — if there can be one — is that the decrease in group activities has allowed time for upgrades.

The pandemic, and subsequent moving of BMT graduation online for families and friends to view in real time, has allowed training teams time to replace

equipment, he said.

"Under normal circumstances, with graduations being held every week, there was never time to replace the parade ground speaker system," De La Rosa said. "Now, with contracting's help and a new speaker system in place, everyone attending graduations at the parade field in the future should be able to hear everything loud and clear."

The need for contracts to support BMT has also led to the streamlining of procedures to expedite purchases.

"We are currently working multiple requirements with a very short request notice and suspense," De La Rosa said. "Working the requirements for requests would normally require 90 to 180 days, but these have all been last-minute requests, and we are working them in record time, down to less than 30 days from inception and development to award."

De La Rosa added that the contractors have been very flexible in responding to their instructions based on guidance from the CDC.

"No contractor is allowed on base unless they follow the

physical distancing guidelines and mask requirements," he said. "We also only allowed one contractor at a time to conduct a site visit."

Another contract that is essential to keeping the training pipeline flowing at JBSA is the contract for food services.

"The 502nd Contracting Squadron's Installation Acquisition Flight has processed numerous modifications against the current JBSA — Lackland's full food-service contract, the biggest food service contract in the Air Force, in support of COVID-19 requirements," according to Gary Wynder, 502nd Contracting Squadron section chief and contracting officer for the flight. "The contract provides services for JBSA-Lackland's 13 dining facilities, including a JBSA-Camp Bullis location, one flight kitchen, two warehouses, a field feeding site located at the BEAST [Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training] at JBSA-Chapman Training Annex."

The coordination of the contract modifications took a major effort from multiple mission partners.

"Coordinating organizations for the contract modifications are the 802nd Force Support Squadron and the using organizations, the 37th Training Wing, and other mission partners," he said. "We have all tirelessly worked with the contractor, Texas Work Force Commission, and its subcontractor, to negotiate the COVID-19 requirements within this contract."

Wynder noted that the contractor has been very responsive to the needs of the government, which in turn has resulted in little to minimal impact on training missions at JBSA.

"In support of COVID-19, numerous modifications to the contract have been made, are being made, and, depending on the pandemic status, may be made in the future support of the ever-changing mission requirements of the 37th TRW training mission," he said, adding that modifications to the contract, as necessary, will continue to ensure trainees remain safe.

"Contract modifications have been made in support of the Restriction of Movement effort with new incoming trainees and the reduction of Kitchen Patrol by student trainees," he said, noting that the reduction in KP duties supported by the trainees is expected to minimize the students' exposure to COVID-19.

Wynder said contracting personnel will continue to support training needs throughout the pandemic, including researching options for various other services.

"Requests have also been submitted for furniture modifications to support physical distancing requirements and teleworking," he said. "This is a reflection that customers are taking action to ensure employees will be safe should they need to come into the office, while at home, or when the restrictions are lifted."

# RANDOLPH

## New AETC Command Chief focused on Airmen, valuing force generation

By Dan Hawkins

AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The First Command welcomed Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson as its new senior enlisted advisor to the commander and senior staff effective Aug. 1, 2020.

Thompson, who replaces Chief Master Sgt. Julie Gudgel as the command chief of Air Education and Training Command, is coming into the position after serving as the 19th Air Force command chief.

"I'm not sure 'excited' is a strong enough word to describe how I feel about the opportunity to serve as the Command Chief for Air Education and Training Command," Thompson said. "This is the FIRST COMMAND. We are the first people Airmen are exposed to and we are charged with the awesome responsibility of taking America's young men and women and turning them into professional, disciplined warfighters for the Air Force and Space Force."

Growing up in Florida, Thompson was looking for a job with potential and growth opportunities, plus the chance to earn money for college. Several of his high school friends were in the Air Force and convinced him to join as well.

His career path specifically came about because of a family connection and love for helicopters.

"My uncle was a flight engineer in Special Ops during Vietnam and I wanted to do that as my career field, but at the time you could not come into the



STAFF SGT. DYLAN NUCKOLLS

Air Force directly as a flight engineer," Thompson said. "To get there, you had to do a tour in aircraft maintenance first. I was fortunate enough to be able to choose helicopter maintenance and I truly enjoyed my time as a crew chief, but I knew I really wanted to fly!"

After his first reenlistment, Thompson was accepted to cross-train into the flight engineer career field, spending four years in Air Mobility Command as an aircrew member on C-130E aircraft before ending up in Air Force Special Operations near the end of 2001, where he flew on the MC-130H Combat Talon II.

"I had the opportunity to fly with some incredible aviators,

work with incredible users, and fly some really hard missions," Thompson said. "I had great commanders, leaders, mentors, and teammates who invested in me to help me excel at my job. Most importantly, they showed me the value of being a good non-commissioned officer and senior non-commissioned officer."

The idea of being a command chief didn't enter the equation for Thompson until after he was selected for promotion to chief master sergeant, and assigned as the squadron superintendent for a large operations support squadron with 11 flights and Airmen from a multitude of Air Force specialty codes.

"We had every AFSC

imaginable in the unit, and a really high tempo operational mission. The ability to devote time, energy, and effort into directly developing, mentoring, and assisting SNOs, NCOs, and Airmen while being part of a command team with dynamic leaders and a critically important mission, really opened my eyes," Thompson said. "I was fortunate to have some great commanders and command chiefs who showed me I could continue to do that on a larger scale, and I was fortunate to serve as the wing command chief at Cannon Air Force Base followed by 19th Air Force."

Coming into the position, one of the priorities Thompson has

*U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson (right), 19th Air Force command chief, speaks with Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Weimer, 58th Special Operations Wing command chief, during an immersion tour of the 58th SOW at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, Feb. 10. Thompson took over duties as the command chief of Air Education and Training Command Aug. 1.*

his sights focused on right away is valuing force generation.

"We have to ensure AETC is a command people want to come to, want to work hard at while they are here, and are recognized for that incredibly hard work recruiting, training, and educating exceptional Airmen," Thompson said.

With a transparent leadership style, Thompson is ready to roll his sleeves up and dig in on all matters affecting the readiness, training, development, utilization, and resiliency of the command's Airmen.

"We have great leaders across our command starting at the top with Lt. Gen. (Brad) Webb, and we will continue working to make this command better than it was the day before," Thompson said. "I'm a pretty open book. We have an important job to do and I want us to be the best we can while ensuring our Airmen and families experience the best quality of service we can provide."

AETC includes Air Force Recruiting Service, 2nd and 19th Air Forces, and Air University. AETC operates more than 1,400 trainers, fighter and mobility aircraft, 25 wings, 11 bases and five geographically separated groups.

The command's approximately 60,000 active-duty, Reserve, Guard, civilian and contractor personnel train more than 293,000 total force Airmen, joint and international students per year annually, providing combat-ready Airmen to commanders across the Department of Defense.



# Earn a digital badge for what you know and can do

By Christa D'Andrea

FORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Getting credit for what you know and can do is becoming easier with the launch of a digital credentials beta test currently underway.

Under the Force Development umbrella, Air Education and Training Command's Credentialing Division has partnered with industry and academia to test a digital credentialing, or "badging" process, for individuals within the Air Force Learning Professionals, Bio-environmental and First Sergeants communities.

"This is a ground-breaking initiative for individuals to start earning credentials that are personal, verifiable, transferable and shareable," said Dr. Angi Canada, AETC Credentialing chief. "Essentially earning these badges is the first step to building a 21st Century digital resume. An individual's resume will not only list a skill or

knowledge, but that skill or knowledge will be represented visually, and the associated metadata shows when and how the individual earned it."

A digital badge is a web-based version of a credential, or learning outcome, which can be verified in real-time. Each digital badge is associated with an image and metadata that provides information about what the badge represents and the evidence submitted to support earning it.

The badging process is an alternative form of credentialing that is currently used in major industry and academic organizations such as IBM, Microsoft and NASA.

"Having your skills represented as a digital badge gives you a way to share your abilities online in a way that is simple and convenient," Canada added. "For the Air Force, this means peers, supervisors and leadership have concrete evidence and a deeper understanding of what you had to do to earn your

credential and what you're capable of."

The Air Force Learning Professionals community — anyone who is involved in any aspect of learning experiences — is the first group in the beta test to have the opportunity to earn the learning and development professional badges:

- ▶▶ Learning Theory Applied
- ▶▶ Digital Assessment Designer
- ▶▶ Evaluation of Learning Systems — Level 1
- ▶▶ Evaluation of Learning Systems — Level 2
- ▶▶ Digital Instruction Development and Delivery
- ▶▶ Adobe Captivate Lesson Development
- ▶▶ eXtended Reality (XR) Foundations
- ▶▶ Classroom Instruction Using an LMS
- ▶▶ Learning Science.

According to Lorelei Gomez, Digital Badging branch chief, the test is part of developing a framework for the Air Force that would take the service to the next level in terms of Developing the Airmen We

Need.

"Digital badging has been around for a while," Gomez said. "Think in terms of gaming and fitness apps. Players and participants would earn badges when they reached a new level or goal. This is a similar concept except these badges are validated and verified micro-credentials versus trophies."

She added that they aren't just online rewards, but rather contain rich, useful data that prove an individual's abilities in a particular area.

"For leadership, this means they will have a more thorough knowledge of the capabilities and level of competence of their Airmen," she said.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy points out the need to deliberately develop Air & Space Professionals through a competitive approach to force development and talent management.

"As part of the Force Development initiatives for the Air Force, developing a competency-based construct

that is individualized, and awards and credits Airmen for what they know and can do is a critical component to readiness and retention," Canada added. "Many people have technical and soft skills that go unnoticed and aren't captured anywhere. Digital badging will allow an individual's spectrum of skills to be accurately captured."

Developing the Airmen We Need is the Force Development approach to developing a modern, learner-centric enterprise that values and invests in Airmen as individual learners and as members of high-performing teams. This includes documenting what Airmen know and can do within a digital portfolio.

Individuals within the Learning Professionals community who are interested in participating in the beta test should email AETC.A3BA.Workflow@us.af.mil. To view the badges and the earning criteria, visit <https://www.youracclaim.com/organizations/learning-and-development-professionals/badges>.

## AETC cultivates innovation with new APAN online tool

From Air Education and Training Command  
Public Affairs

Innovators across Air Education and Training Command now have an online collaboration tool designed to help them discover, learn, and promote a culture of innovation.

Airmen are encouraged to check out the AETC Innovation Community on the All Partner Access Network, or APAN, at <https://community.apan.org/wg/aetc>. The site is designed to connect Airmen in AETC, and across the Air Force, with information and resources about innovation projects happening across the First Command.

"This truly is exciting and will help all Airmen get after AETC's priorities of advancing force development and transforming the way Airmen learn," said Col. William Mamourieh, HQ AETC's director of analysis and innovation directorate. "With all the amazing things our Airmen are doing to improve mission capability, our goal is to provide a resource that helps them share ideas and lessons learned, connect, and collaborate with others to turn their ideas into innovations."

The main feature in the tool is the AETC Innovation Dashboard, which provides insights into innovation efforts across AETC.

Users will be able to see who



COURTESY GRAPHIC

is innovating across the command, and to explore innovation activities across AETC, by base or technology," Mamourieh said. "This allows Airmen who might have questions about a project they are working on, or considering, to find other innovators to

collaborate with, potentially avoiding duplication of effort and also saving money in the process."

The AETC Innovation Community on APAN is available through government or commercial network connections, and a common

access card, or CAC, is not required for access.

Airmen's feedback on this resource can submit via the website, email to the Innovation Advancement Division members at [aetc.a9a.workflow.2@us.af.mil](mailto:aetc.a9a.workflow.2@us.af.mil), or call 210-652-8413.