

JBSA LEGACY

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

SEPTEMBER 25, 2020



PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS TYLER MCQUISTON

Airmen assigned to the 74th Aerial Port Squadron rig equipment to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during a rigging practice mission Sept. 9 at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Annex.

Joint warriors utilize JBSA landing zones for vertical lift training

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ARNORTH troops fight wildfires

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Third class graduates from Pilot Training Next at JBSA-Randolph

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Flu vaccine essential during pandemic

By Macy Hinds

NAVAL HEALTH CLINIC HAWAII

Influenza, or flu, season is upon us. In the United States, flu season lasts through the fall and winter. While influenza viruses circulate year-round, most flu activity peaks between December and February, but can last as late as May.

Not only are we entering flu season, but we are also in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, further stressing the importance of the flu vaccine. The vaccine could help reduce the overall impact of contagious respiratory illnesses on the population and decrease the burden on the health care system during the overlapping flu season and COVID-19 pandemic.

While the COVID-19 and influenza viruses are different, symptoms of the two can look the same, making it difficult to differentiate between them based on symptoms alone.

“Both can cause high fevers, body aches and headaches. COVID is more likely to cause a cough and shortness of breath, but those symptoms could also occur with influenza,” said Navy Capt. Lisa Pearse, Navy Region Hawaii Public Health Emergency Officer from Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Pearl Harbor. “Lab testing may be required to tell them apart. One specific difference is that only COVID causes a loss of smell

or taste.”

While there is no vaccine for COVID-19 yet, the flu shot can help reduce the risk of illness, hospitalization and death from an influenza infection.

“The very best thing you can do to prevent influenza is to get your flu shot,” Pearse emphasized.

You may have options when it comes to where and when you can get your flu shot.

For TRICARE beneficiaries who want to get a flu vaccine before it is available at the clinic, they can use a TRICARE network participating pharmacy at no cost. Visit www.tricare.mil/flu to learn about TRICARE coverage and the flu vaccine. Keep in mind, you should always get a record of your vaccines if you receive them outside of the military treatment facility. You will need to share the information with your primary care provider or immunizations clinic to keep your vaccination records current.

It is important to remember that immunizations clinics may currently look different during the pandemic. Take into account any changes to hours of operations, services, safety precautions and entry requirements at your local military treatment facility when planning to visit the immunizations clinic for your flu vaccine.

For the safety of healthcare personnel and other patients,



MACY HINDS

A Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Sailor examines flu vaccines Sept. 14 at Shipyard Clinic Immunizations Department at Naval Health Clinic Hawaii.

don't forget your mask. If you are someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, postpone your visit to the immunizations clinic, regardless of whether you have symptoms. Come back another time once you have met the criteria to discontinue your isolation.

It's uncertain what COVID-19 coupled with flu season will look like this year. However, there are preventative steps you can take to help protect yourself and your family while reducing the burden on healthcare resources.

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or

CDC, recommends staying home when you are sick, covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, cleaning your hands, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and preserve a strong immune system by getting plenty of sleep, staying active, managing your stress, drinking fluids, and eating nutritious foods. These everyday actions combined with the vaccine can help slow the spread of contagious respiratory illnesses and prepare us for a joint COVID-19 and flu season to come.

Air Force pushes fitness testing to Jan. 1

From Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

Official physical fitness assessments across the Department of the Air Force will resume Jan. 1, 2021, officials announced Sept. 16.

To continue minimizing close contact among personnel during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and ensure units and

personnel are fully ready to resume, testing has been delayed from October to January, and testing in January will move forward without obtaining waist, height and weight measurements.

“We know people are staying fit regardless, but we want to give our Airmen enough time to prepare,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen.

Charles Q. Brown Jr.

Beginning Jan. 1, uniformed members are expected to test on the 1.5-mile run, 1 minute of push-ups and 1 minute of sit-ups. The body composition component (abdominal circumference), height and weight measurements are postponed until further notice. All members, including those with abdominal circumference

exemptions, will receive maximum points for the AC component as part of their official score.

“This is an unprecedented situation and we've put a lot of work into assessing how and when we could safely resume fitness testing across the force,” said Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, deputy

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JBSA LEGACY

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Feedback Fridays

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller

502D AIR BASE WING AND JOINT BASE
SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

Feedback Fridays is a weekly forum that aims to connect the 502d Air Base Wing with members of the Joint Base San Antonio community. Questions are collected during commander's calls, town hall meetings and throughout the week.

If you have a question or concern, please send an email to jbsapublicaffairs@gmail.com using the subject line "Feedback Fridays." Questions will be further researched and published as information becomes available.

Q. Why am I being charged club dues when the clubs aren't open?

A. Thank you for your question. The JBSA clubs reinstated the club membership dues Aug. 15. Before that, dues were suspended for three months while the clubs were closed and we found new ways to offer programming to customers.

The JBSA clubs are currently open for official and private functions. Your club membership entitles you to free room rental as well as discounts on your catered events or meals served during a function.

If there is a positive side to the COVID pandemic it is that it has forced us to think outside of the box and offer new programs that are designed to provide fun and resiliency to our customers while keeping them safe and healthy. Clubs have created multiple special events. Parking Lot Bingo has been a great success and club members have the ability to win huge jackpots including a \$2,500 purse guaranteed per night and the potential to win up to \$20,000.

Other programs include the popular Princess Tea Party,



COURTESY GRAPHIC

virtual cooking classes, and other family events.

Club membership at JBSA has the added bonus of having benefits at both JBSA-Randolph and JBSA-Lackland Clubs. We encourage our members to take advantage of both locations and the programs that are being offered.

We miss our amazing customers and hope that soon our doors will be open full time. We look forward to celebrating that day with our club members.

Q. I'm a golfer and a member of the Randolph Oaks golf course. My question pertains to the use of a personal rideable electric three-wheel cart on the Randolph Oaks Golf Course.

I was told it was not allowed on the Randolph course but it's permitted at the Fort Sam

Houston courses. Why is there a difference in policy under the joint umbrella?

In addition, all private and municipal courses in the San Antonio community allow these type carts by charging a "trail fee."

Personal carts of this type are the wave of the future and are advantageous under the current virus requirements. Personal carts as described contributes to social distancing, frees up course owned carts for other patrons and reduces wear and tear on course owned golf carts.

A clarification on this policy will be greatly appreciated.

A. Thank you for reaching out with this question. Currently, the use of privately owned carts at the Fort Sam Houston course is a

privilege extended to those who pay for storage at the facility there.

We are looking into the possibility of allowing privately owned carts at our other courses, but we are at the early stages of coordination on any potential changes to the current policy.

There are a number of considerations we have to take into account, such as the need for golf cart insurance and "hold harmless" agreements that we must coordinate with the appropriate agencies before any potential changes could be made.

Please touch base with the golf course manager to leave your contact information so we can keep you up to date with developments. Call the JBSA-Randolph Oaks Golf Course at 210-652-4653 and press option three to speak with the manager.

Enlisted-to-physician program seeks applicants

By Sharon Holland

UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY

Laura Barrera was inspired to join the Air Force by her two brothers who both served in the military. After serving several years as an enlisted medic herself, Barrera felt she had been impactful, but she felt her scope of practice was limited and she had a different calling: she wanted to be a doctor.

Barrera discovered that the Uniformed Services University's Enlisted to Medical School Preparatory Program, or EMDP2, offered her that opportunity. The two-year program provides a pathway for promising enlisted service members interested in a career as a military physician. EMDP2 offers an intensive pre-medical program, mentoring, and MCAT preparation, while also allowing service members to maintain their current rank, pay and benefits while going to school full-time at George Mason University's Prince William Campus.

"Prior to applying to EMDP2, I was already taking science classes to apply to medical school. I would work a 12-hour shift, then go to class for four hours, repeat," Barrera said. "When I heard about this program, I was excited that not only would school be my main focus, but the mentorship that came along with it was a huge bonus. I did not realize the intricacies of medical school applications and the difficulty of the



COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. Richard Thomas, president of the Uniformed Services University, welcomes a new class of Enlisted to Medical School Preparatory Program students to campus in this 2019 photo.

MCAT. I was so grateful this program addressed those two issues. EMDP2 allowed me to be with other military members in the same situation, and we were able to learn from each other and help each other. Just like one would in medical school."

Barrera was accepted for the program and entered in the late summer of 2015. She successfully completed it two years later, and then applied and was accepted into medical school at USU's F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine in 2017. She has been very active in a number of student interest groups and initiatives throughout her nearly four years at USU

and plans to pursue Emergency Medicine after she graduates from medical school. She only has a few months left before she receives her M.D. degree and her dream comes to fruition.

The EMDP2 program application window is now open for the next round of aspiring military doctors who will start the program in summer 2021. The program, which began in 2014, is open to Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps enlisted personnel. The charter class consisted of 10 students, and now, beginning its seventh year, there are 50 students across the two enrolled classes. Eight members of the inaugural EMDP2

class have graduated with their M.D. degree from USU's School of Medicine and these physicians are now engaged in various medical specialty training programs across the Military Health System.

This year, working with its military service partners, the program is transitioning to a new application process. The new application system will standardize the process across the military services, while still allowing for individual service requirements to be met. The selection process is streamlined and will require candidates to submit applications directly to USU, with specific service and command clearances.

"This new system is a hybrid of USU's medical school application process that has been modified specifically for the military population," said Althea Green-Dixon, Ph.D., director of the EMDP2 program and recruitment at USU. "It is intended to provide a common operating picture for members of the selection committee and, more importantly, better posture these candidates for the medical school application and admissions process in the future. We are excited to transition the EMDP2 to this next phase of its evolution."

Learn more about the EMDP2 program at <https://www.usuhs.edu/emdp2>.

Air Force members to receive survey on interpersonal violence

From Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

The Air Force will soon survey total Force Airmen and Space Professionals about their experiences surrounding interpersonal violence.

The survey was distributed the week of Sept. 7 to all Airmen and Space Professionals including civilians, active duty, Guard and Reserve members.

"We're asking for people to participate in a survey to help us better understand their individual experiences surrounding interpersonal violence in our ranks," said Brig. Gen. April Vogel, director for manpower, personnel, recruiting and services at the National Guard Bureau, and the interpersonal violence task force lead.

This survey is part of a two-pronged

approach in which the survey data and the data gathered from reviewing past cases involving interpersonal violence will be used to identify any themes or areas for improvement. Interpersonal violence can range from stalking and bullying to domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse.

"Our goal is to determine if we are keeping our Airmen and Space Professionals safe when they are facing interpersonal violence," Vogel said. "The survey information will be used to shape our plan of action and recommendations to senior leadership."

Survey participants may also volunteer to take part in a limited number of small focus groups by opting in at the end of the survey. Participants will remain anonymous

throughout the survey process, and if members choose to take part in the focus groups, their survey data remains separate from their personal contact information. Additionally, there is an opportunity for command leadership teams to provide their perspectives.

"We encourage participation from our total force service members with anything to share regarding their experiences dealing with interpersonal violence, to include command leadership teams," Vogel said. "We want to hear your stories."

The task force stood up in July to explore processes, programs and leadership actions associated with keeping Airmen and Space Professionals safe when faced with interpersonal violence situations.

"We encourage participation from our total force service members with anything to share regarding their experiences dealing with interpersonal violence, to include command leadership teams. We want to hear your stories."

Brig. Gen. April Vogel, Interpersonal Violence Task Force lead

FITNESS

From page 2

chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. "People have been juggling work, child-care issues, homeschooling, family separations, isolation, etc., and we know it's been more challenging to maintain fitness. This delay gives our folks extra time to prepare for January, while also ensuring units have more time to implement additional COVID precautions."

"We're also aware our resumption occurs right after the annual holiday season that can be challenging for people's fitness," Kelly said.

Fitness assessment due dates in 2021 will primarily depend on the date and score of the last official test. Airmen and Space Professionals may determine their next fitness assessment due date by visiting the Official Physical Assessment Due Date Matrix on myPers.

"This transition requires a careful and systematic approach," Kelly said. "Our goal is to begin testing where it makes sense, but also give commanders the needed tools and flexibility to make decisions that make sense for their locations and their people."

Fitness assessment cells, fitness center staff, physical training leaders and members performing fitness assessments will adhere to physical distancing protocols and other local precautions as determined by installation commanders.

Commanders may delay official fitness assessments beyond Jan. 1, 2021, based on the recommendation of local public health officials, the continuation of closed fitness centers and extended state-wide restriction of movement and gatherings.

For more information, Airmen and Space Professionals should contact their fitness assessment cells and visit the COVID-19 Fitness Guidance page on myPers.

Air Force military ambassador program looking forward to Fiesta 2021

From 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

As Joint Base San Antonio looks ahead to Fiesta 2021, the Air Force begins its search for a male and female military ambassador. The Air Force Military Ambassador Program will feature two Airmen, one female and one male, to represent the service.

All E-4 to E-7 Air Force members, 21 years old and older and assigned to JBSA, are eligible to apply to become a military ambassador. Nomination packages will be distributed to public affairs offices across JBSA by Sept. 25.

"The Air Force Military Ambassador Program showcases the quality and professionalism of the American Warfighter. The program enhances the strong bond that already exists



COURTESY PHOTO

As San Antonio prepares for Fiesta 2021, each military service at Joint Base San Antonio begins its search for a male and female military ambassador.

between the military and local communities around South Texas," said Command Chief Master Sgt. Wendell Snider, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio.

Nominations are due to the 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston by close of business Nov. 2. Nominees must provide a letter of recommendation from their unit commander.

Once nominated, candidates

appear before a selection panel of chief master sergeants and former Air Force ambassadors. The selection panel will review applications, conduct interviews and select the ambassadors.

Contact the 502nd ABW PA Office at 210-221-0456 for more information or email usaf.502.pao@mail.mil. An application packet can also be found on the JBSA website at <https://www.jbsa.mil>.

VA joins Army in major DOD research effort to prevent suicides

By Thomas Brading

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

An ongoing Defense Department-directed epidemiological study recently got a helping hand that could help generate actionable recommendations to reduce military suicides.

A new memorandum of agreement on the Study to Assess Risk & Resilience in Servicemembers, or STARRS, was inked July 27 to help produce actionable information for senior military leaders, said Col. Sheila Seitz, the STARRS deputy director and Army Reserve advisor.

“This is something the Army cares about,” she said.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is the newest member of the group that includes the Army, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, and the National Institute of Mental Health, or NIMH. The Army serves as the operational and management support arm of STARRS, the largest mental health study ever conducted on military personnel.

“We’re excited to partner with the Department of Defense and the National Institute on Mental Health on this major research effort aimed at preventing suicides,” said Richard A. Stone, M.D., Veterans Health Administration executive in charge. “Many Veterans experience a difficult transition from the military. This research will promote data-sharing between DOD and VA and thereby provide us with critical information to help these Veterans.”

“It also promises to inform our outreach to Veterans who have not yet used VA health care,” he said.

STARRS is meant to “increase the resiliency of our

Soldiers so that they are mission ready as much as possible. But it’s also important to help our Soldiers for Life,” she said. “That is why partnering with the VA is so important, because of our commitment to all Soldiers — not just ones currently serving.”

As part of that commitment, the Army and NIMH established STARRS in 2009. Since then, a coalition of researchers from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, or USU; Harvard University; University of Michigan; and the University of California-San Diego have compiled data to form relevant and actionable research to help address current and future needs of the military and published more than 100 articles in scientific journals and publications, said Kenneth Cox, the Army’s science liaison for the STARRS research team.

“NIMH is pleased to continue our collaboration with the Army, DOD, and now VA in contributing to suicide prevention efforts for service members and veterans,” NIMH officials said of the announcement. “We are proud that the work of STARRS has already substantially changed the national and even international dialogue about understanding and addressing suicide risk.”

“The STARRS study is leading us to new approaches to sustain the health and readiness of our service members,” said Richard W. Thomas, president of USU. “Its findings have contributed to new approaches for prevention, treatment, and health care policies for the entire Military Health System and for the nation.

“STARRS represents yet another way that military medicine contributes to the



COURTESY PHOTO

A Defense Department-directed epidemiological study recently teamed up with the Department of Veterans Affairs July 27 to help produce actionable information for senior military leaders to help troops.

health and wellbeing of our troops and their families,” he added.

Funded by the DOD, the research partnership helps pinpoint risk factors linked to troops’ emotional and mental health, while also creating actionable steps toward suicide prevention, Cox said, along with other mental and behavioral health issues still faced in the military.

“Funding has been committed to perform the long-term follow-up of the health of the study population through 2024,” Seitz said.

From 2004 to 2009, STARRS examined the records of 1.6 million Soldiers on active duty, and from 2010 to 2014, it has collected new information directly from nearly 10,000 Soldiers at various points in their careers.

From 2015 to 2020, the STARRS—Longitudinal Study, a follow-on study, has continued supporting separate Army’s efforts to develop and test more effective suicide prevention and intervention policies, programs, and initiatives, Cox said.

In the years after the study was created, the majority of

troops have separated from the Army, Cox said. It’s no secret “most Soldiers separate after the first five to 10 years of military service,” which causes a loss of data.

Also, there is an increased risk of death by suicide in the first two years following military separation, Cox said, and a specific subgroup within that high-risk area among individuals who were discharged from military service under other than honorable conditions.

This led to researchers to ask, “Are there things the Army should be doing to figure out what’s going on, and how we could correct it?” he said. In the past “we didn’t have much information to characterize the transition period” for recently separated Soldiers.

Tangible benefits to the Army include technology transfer — like data and methods, a better understanding of risk factors, and feedback loops to relevant policy, program, and research communities.

So, what does this mean? According to Cox, the VA can help researchers analyze data about recently separated

troops. This will also help maximize the return from previous research investments that require detailed evaluation of findings for actionability.

To do this, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs has established the STARRS Research Advisory Team that analyzes every new STARRS finding.

In the meantime, STARRS will continue collecting new information from Soldiers who previously participated in the initial STARRS study, and expand the administrative database to include different types of data for all Soldiers serving since 2004. Analysis of the new data is underway with new results expected later this year.

“STARRS has provided immense value to the Army and DOD, giving us a much deeper understanding of many factors associated with self-harming behavior. The next five years with our new VA partner opens a new window of opportunity for STARRS to focus on what happens in the transition from military to civilian life,” said officials from the Defense Health Agency.

When complete, the expanded study will contain over 3 billion de-identified, administrative data records of Soldiers extracted from 46 Army and DOD databases. The expanded study will support analyses that are more complex and improve the performance of predictive models using advanced statistical methods such as machine learning.

“As Gen. Creighton Abrams said, ‘Soldiers are the Army,’” Seitz said, “I believe as an Army we will keep this a high priority — as far as research and effort — until we meet our goals to reduce death by suicide as much as possible.”

FORT SAM HOUSTON

ARNORTH troops fighting wildfires in West

By Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE
WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In the midst of the California wildfires, there are over 200 U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) Soldiers supporting wildland fire ground response operations in the August complex, located in the densely forested northern part of the state.

"We are proud to support the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service in their effort to suppress the fires in Northern California," said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, ARNORTH and Joint Force Land Component commander, or JFLCC.

Richardson said the Soldiers assisting in this mission are highly-trained and well equipped with all of the protective gear needed to keep them safe, to include measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The U.S. Army North supporting unit, the 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, or JBLM, Washington, is assisting the U.S. Forest Service, at the request of the National Interagency Fire Center, with wildland fire response efforts in the Mendocino National Forest.

The Soldiers deployed Aug. 31 and conducted training and fire line certification prior to and immediately upon arrival to base camp.

Since their arrival at the August Complex wildland fire, the Soldiers have been working extremely hard, hiking up mountains carrying hoses and equipment, creating grids to search for hotspots, and helping ensure extinguished

wildfires do not reignite.

Spc. Michael Ybarra, a photographer with the 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment from JBLM, is in California following the 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion into the fire zone.

The California native said covering the wildfires is like nothing he has ever experienced.

"For the past couple of weeks, I have been out documenting the Soldiers while they conduct mop up and burn operations. That is when they go out and check for hot spots, and burn any wildfire fuel to prevent further spread into populated areas," he said.

"The Soldiers go out on location for three or four days at a time, working practically non-stop in the heat and smoke and ash, digging lines, cutting down trees, and creating controlled burns," he said, adding that the Soldiers have a break between rotations to replenish, take showers and rest before they head back out.

Ybarra said the battalion crews out on the lines are very upbeat about what they are accomplishing.

"Their spirits are high. A lot of these guys are from California, so they are happy to back doing what they can do to keep their state and their home safe," he said.

"At the end of the day, we are Soldiers. We are here to serve the U.S. of A., so doing this work is essentially that," he said. "We are serving our nation by trying to control and suppress these fires, and aiding our federal allies."

For Ybarra, who has never covered fires before, the experience has been mind-boggling.



SPC. MICHAEL YBARRA

"Being able to experience fires like this, of this magnitude — now the largest fire in California history — is something you won't soon forget," he said.

Pvt. First Class Laura Peña, who is normally a technical engineer specialist who surveys building sites and tests soil with the 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion at JBLM, is currently spending her days organizing convoys and tracking her battalion's troop movements in the Mendocino National Forest.

Peña said while troops are active in the fight against the August Complex wildfires, measures are taken constantly to ensure their safety.

"I am the link between the Soldiers on the fire line and command team," she said. "We are basically here overshadowing, making sure our troops are safe, and we have the accountability of them as they support the division

and branch commanders fighting the wildland fire."

In addition, Peña said trained professional wildland firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management are assigned to each crew to ensure processes are being followed. Each crew also has a communication device that is used to contact the Tactical Operations Center where Peña is located.

"We have different methods of communication, but the main method is a software that allows us to see their real-time location and allows them to send us messages regarding their movements, status, medical situations, or even request information," she said.

During this historic 2020 wildfire season, Peña said she considers it a privilege to be able to contribute to the fight.

"I feel honored to be here, to help in such a historic event," she said. "It is an excellent

opportunity to help in some way when the country needs us the most."

Recently, the U.S. Army North commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Phil Barretto, senior enlisted leader, visited the area where the Soldiers are deployed and were briefed by 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion Soldiers and members of the Great Basin Team 2. They also met with the director of California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, director of CAL FIRE, and the Pacific Southwest Region Director of Fire and Aviation Management for U.S. Forest Service, to discuss current response operations.

"Having these key partnerships already in place and quickly integrating our supported units is pivotal to success," Barretto said. "Our service members are ready, trained and capable of supporting when called on."

U.S. Army North Commanding General Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson (left) speaks with Soldiers of the 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion during her visit to the August Complex wildland fire Sept. 15 in the Mendocino National Forest.



PHOTOS BY JOSE A. TORRES JR.

Sgt. 1st Class Timothy French from the Caisson Platoon Headquarters Support Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, U.S. Army North, explains to his seven-year-old son Jacob the process of blood extraction during a blood drive held at the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston Military & Family Readiness Center Sept. 16.

Community rolls up sleeves for EFMP blood drive

By David DeKunder
502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Joint Base San Antonio community rolled up its sleeves Sept. 16 in support of the JBSA Exceptional Family Member Program's blood drive at the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Military & Family Readiness Center.

The blood drive was held in observance of Blood Cancer Awareness Month and in conjunction with the Exceptional Family Member Program, or EFMP, and the Armed Services Blood Program, or ASBP, at JBSA-Fort Sam

Houston that supports Brooke Army Medical Center.

EFMP provides comprehensive and coordinated community support, housing, educational, medical and personnel services to families with special needs. ASBP is the military's official blood program, providing quality blood products for active-duty members, veterans and their families.

During the event, Sgt. 1st Class Timothy French from the Caisson Platoon Headquarters Support Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, U.S. Army North, and his family were there to personally thank all the volunteers that donated blood during the drive. French's seven-year-old son, Jacob, has had 13 blood transfusions in his life, so blood drives are very important to him and his family.

All blood donations are going to ASBP and Brooke Army Medical Center for patients in both the military and community populations who are treated at the hospital. Information about ASBP can be found at: <https://militaryblood.dod.mil>. Anyone who has travel or medical questions related to donating blood can call 210-295-4655.



BAMC makes preparations for upcoming flu season

By Daniel J. Calderón
BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Staff members at Brooke Army Medical Center are getting geared up for the upcoming flu season.

"It is even more important to get a flu vaccine this year to decrease the impact of respiratory illness within the community and decrease the stress on a healthcare system already dealing with a pandemic," said Army Maj. Sharon D. Douglas, chief of Public Health Nursing at BAMC. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working with influenza manufacturers to ensure extra vaccines are available this flu season; however, we are aware that there may be shipping delays due to the pandemic."

In anticipation of shipping delays, BAMC staff ordered the vaccines in December 2019.

The CDC recommends people get their flu vaccine in September or October; however, vaccinations should continue into and beyond January as long as flu viruses are circulating.

There are multiple vaccines available — with different types of vaccines available for younger and older patients. During the 2019-2020 flu season, BAMC staff will be administering vaccines to beneficiaries as young as six months old.

The CDC's website states it is likely that flu viruses and the virus that cause COVID-19 will both be spreading throughout the fall and winter. Therefore, patients need to ensure they take advantage of their ability to receive a flu vaccine. The CDC recommends that all people six months and older get a yearly flu vaccine.

Children between six months and eight years of age who have not been vaccinated before will require two doses



MACY HINDS

A Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Sailor opens vaccination refrigerator to examine southern hemisphere flu vaccine at Shipyard Clinic Immunizations Department at Naval Health Clinic Hawaii Sept. 14.

of the flu vaccine for their age group, said Douglas. The doses must be spaced at least four weeks apart to provide adequate protection. Children who have been vaccinated before need only one dose.

BAMC will have available again this year the high dose flu vaccines for beneficiaries 65 years and older.

The high dose flu vaccine is four times the standard dose in order to trigger a greater immune response and provide better protection.

"Influenza vaccines are

ordered based on historical data from previous years," Douglas said. "BAMC plans to make the vaccines available to the clinics for distribution to their high-risk patients as soon as they become available."

Beneficiaries have a variety of options available to receive a flu vaccine during the current season. They can call 210-916-7FLU (210-916-7358) for the most up-to-date flu vaccination campaign information. Active-duty service members have priority

to receive the flu vaccine. All beneficiaries should call ahead to see if the flu vaccine is available at their assigned clinic.

Beneficiaries can also call 877-363-1303 to see if there is a participating network pharmacy with flu vaccine availability. Or, they can search online at www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/FluVaccine to see if there is a TRICARE authorized provider in their area. However, they may incur a copay for the visit.

"It is even more important to get a flu vaccine this year to decrease the impact of respiratory illness within the community and decrease the stress on a healthcare system already dealing with a pandemic."

Army Maj. Sharon D. Douglas,
chief of Public Health Nursing
at Brooke Army Medical Center

Flu Vaccine Facts

- » Call **210-916-7358** for the most up-to-date flu vaccination campaign information.
- » Active-duty service members have priority to receive the flu vaccine.
- » Beneficiaries should call ahead to see if the flu vaccine is available at their assigned clinic.
- » Beneficiaries can call **877-363-1303** to see if there is a participating network pharmacy with the flu vaccine.
- » Beneficiaries can search online at www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/FluVaccine for a TRICARE authorized provider in their area (a copay may be incurred).

With COVID-19 still a present health concern, Douglas said it is important for all patients to get their flu shot as well as observe other safety protocols.

"It is possible to get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time," she said. "But practicing good hand washing, correctly wearing a mask, and social distancing are effective mitigation strategies for both illnesses."

For more information from the CDC, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/Flu/Index.htm>.

MEDCoE students conduct multi-specialty training at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis

The departments plan to formalize this relationship and continue rigorous training

By Col. Edward Michaud
MEDCOE INTERSERVICE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

In a first for the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoE, multiple departments collaborated for a joint Field Training Exercise at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis recently.

The Department of Combat Medic Training, or DCMT, the Leader Training Center, and the Inter-service Physician Assistant Program conducted multi-specialty nighttime operations training Sept. 9-12.

This initiative from DCMT enabled the Basic Officer Leaders Course, or BOLC, provider specialty tract (physician and physician assistants) to conduct training with the 68 Whiskeys at their training facility.

The physicians and physician assistants, new to Army clinical operations, served as trauma team leaders at the simulated triage station, battalion aid station and evacuation stations. This enhanced both their operational medicine training, as well as the training of medics, who gained the opportunity to conduct operations with feedback from a medical officer.

All three departments plan to formalize this relationship and continue this rigorous operational medicine training in the future.

The MEDCoE students participated in hands-on, scenario-based training using COVID-19 mitigation measures



PHOTOS BY COL. EDWARD MICHAUD

U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence students participate in hands-on, scenario-based training using COVID-19 mitigation measures to combat the added challenges of the pandemic during the MEDCoE multi-service field training exercise at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis Sept. 11.

to combat the added challenges of the pandemic. Physicians and physician assistant BOLC students worked alongside combat medics as a team to ensure proper IV placement, and other Role 1 tasks, during Role 1 Trauma stabilization training.

Role 1 care is the treatment provided prior to surgical intervention or other higher levels of care and includes self-aid, buddy-aid, combat lifesaver, tactical combat casualty care, tactical evacuation, medical evacuation, and treatment at the battalion or brigade aid station. Role 1 aid stations are staffed by physicians, physician assistants and 68W Combat Medics.



Physicians and physician assistant BOLC students worked alongside combat medics as a team to ensure proper IV placement, and other Role 1 tasks, during Role 1 Trauma stabilization training.

DeCA nominates FSH commissary worker for DOD 2020 Outstanding Disabled Employee of the Year

By Rick Brink

DEFENSE COMMISSARY AGENCY
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Whenever Fort Sam Houston Commissary customers shop for bananas, they have Marcus Montague, the Defense Commissary Agency's nominee for a 2020 Defense Disability Award, to thank for the quality and quantity they have to choose from.

The legally blind Montague, who has worked at the commissary for six years, was nominated in May for the 2020 Annual Secretary of Defense Awards for Components and Individuals.

An Oct. 1 awards ceremony is scheduled at the Pentagon to recognize award recipients. The awards support the Department of Defense's long-standing goal of 2 percent employment participation of individuals with targeted disabilities within the DOD civilian workforce.

Shortly after the nomination was announced, the store held a ceremony of its own to recognize Montague's accomplishment. He thanked everyone who had a role in his nomination. It was

“Marcus gives every valued patron who comes into our store his undivided attention and strives to ensure they have the best shopping experience. He’s a testament to all, showing that you can achieve anything with hard work and perseverance.”

Aretha Queen, Fort Sam Houston Commissary store director

well deserved, according to store director Aretha Queen.

“Marcus gives every valued patron who comes into our store his undivided attention and strives to ensure they have the best shopping experience,” Queen said. “He’s a testament to all, showing that you can achieve anything with hard



SUE MONTAGUE

The legally blind Marcus Montague, who has worked at the Fort Sam Houston commissary for six years, was nominated in May for the 2020 Annual Secretary of Defense Awards for Components and Individuals.

work and perseverance.”

While Montague regularly works in the produce department helping stock a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, his

primary responsibility is to maintain the bananas throughout the sales floor. This can include cross-merchandising banana displays in other departments. Queen noted he is “exceptionally attentive” to all his job duties.

“Sometimes once the task is completed he comes to get me and we walk the sales floor together,” she said. “The pride that he has in his job is heartwarming and makes me proud knowing he is an integral part of our team.”

Montague said he likes being part of “the team” and especially enjoys interacting with his fellow employees. The feeling is mutual.

“He comes to work every day with a smile on his face and a ‘how are you doing today’ conversation,” Queen said, calling him an example of how to overcome life’s challenges. “His positive attitude and demeanor brightens the day of his produce department teammates.”

Outside the commissary, Montague is active in his church and the Special Olympics. He also enjoys following the San Antonio Spurs basketball team and the San Antonio Football Club soccer team.

Air Force Families Forever expanding services at JBSA

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Air Force Families Forever, or AFFF, program is expanding its services.

The AFFF is a long-term assistance program that supports family members or next of kin of deceased Airmen, whether they are regular Air Force or Reserve component members, who have fallen or passed away while in combat or conducting non-combat related duties.

Criselda Guerrero-Smith, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Military & Family Readiness Center community readiness consultant/personal and work-life program lead, said AFFF is expanding its program and services to focus on the particular needs of individuals.

“We are trying to reengage and make sure the community knows we are here,” Guerrero-Smith said. “The Air Force has not forgotten about them and we’re here to help when they’re ready.”

The AFFF is expanding support and services to eligible family members and next of kin including spouses, parents, children, step-children and siblings.

Expanded support includes lifetime targeted contact

and engagement, installation access and utilization of installation approved support services and recreation activities.

One of the ways AFFF currently provides assistance to family members and next of kin is helping them obtain Defense Biometric Identification System, or DBIDS, cards that allow them to gain access to installations.

“That DBIDS card allows them to visit and participate in events on base,” Guerrero-Smith said. “It just opens the door for it to be a lot easier for them.”

Other support AFFF offers to Gold Star Families includes:

- » Referral to eligible federal, state, and local resources to include partnering non-governmental organizations
- » Remembrance and connection
- » Connection to installation and community support networks
- » Recognition/memorialization of deceased Airmen
- » Coordination with installation leadership to include family members in the Air Force culture
- » Introduction to installation approved Morale, Welfare, and Recreation activities

For more information on AFFF, call the JBSA-Fort



COURTESY GRAPHIC

Sam Houston M&FRC at 210-221-2705, ask for AFFF. Additional information on AFFF may be found at: www.afpc.af.mil/Benefits-and-Entitlements/Air-Force-Families-Forever.

LACKLAND

Joint warriors utilize JBSA landing zones for training

By Col. Kjäll Gopaul

AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
COMMAND

For the second time in as many weeks, joint warriors converged on Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Annex to formally confirm the suitability of helicopter landing zones in order to expand the maneuver space for vertical lift operations and improve home-station training for San Antonio's military units.

As San Antonio continues to develop out from the city's center, outlying areas that were once remote are now impacted by the encroachment of land development. This expansion places additional pressure on nearby military training activities to consider noise, light, traffic volume, safety, and other environmental factors.

Texas Army National Guard's Company C, 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, a unit of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters that routinely trains with JBSA units at Martindale Army Airfield in southeast San Antonio, had been affected by these factors and has partnered with JBSA to find a solution.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Bill Sierra, standardization pilot for C/2-149th AV, led the initiative to expand training at JBSA-Chapman Annex.

"We are a habitual partner with JBSA — often training with medical, aerial transportation, and security forces units," he said. "Having additional maneuver space so close to Martindale Army Airfield increases the amount of time we can train on-site with our JBSA partners, diversifies the scenarios that can be exercised, and provides a reliable way for our aircrews to sustain proficiency on external loads."

"For our federal and state missions, we are required to maintain the capability of conducting external sling load missions—both for a combat scenario overseas and for the state of Texas in an emergency management event," he said. "Encroachment around Martindale Army Airfield was affecting this."

Sierra said the company has successfully conducted a four-phase proof-of-concept to verify the suitability of JBSA-Chapman Annex with a ground survey, an overflight, an aerial survey, landing passengers, and finally landing external loads."

During the proof-of-concept phases, the joint team transported 20,000 pounds of materiel and 22 personnel across 15 sorties to validate the suitability of the maneuver area for multi-service vertical-lift operations.

"The JBSA staff and tenants were very supportive, and worked very quickly to coordinate the approvals," Sierra said. "It was amazing how quickly we went from walking the field to having an aircraft safely conduct training. With this success, we now have the capability to expand our training partnership with JBSA."

Sierra said the partnership opens doors for the unit and their JBSA partners to advance readiness together, along with the 36th General Support Aviation Battalion, for other lift and assault activities.

"The possibilities are endless at this point for mutually-beneficial training on our mission essential task lists in this joint environment," he said.

Tech. Sgt. Christopher LaPlant, passenger services



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS TYLER MCQUISTON

Airmen assigned to the 74th Aerial Port Squadron rig equipment to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during a rigging practice mission Sept. 9 at Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Annex.

supervisor for the 74th Aerial Port Squadron, participated in the aerial survey Sept. 2 and met with San Antonio organizations to obtain approvals for the JBSA-Chapman Annex. The meeting was with representatives from air traffic control, range operations, the military working dog schoolhouse, and the Battlefield Airmen schoolhouse.

"I'm glad I volunteered for this," LaPlant said. "I thought it was extremely important to develop new relationships and get a broader perspective of what happens across JBSA."

For a sling-load mission Sept. 8, the team prepared A-22 cargo bags with water barrels, rigged and inspected the load, and rehearsed attaching them to a helicopter.

"Our team of 16 Airmen put out marking panels on the landing zone and repeatedly attached the sling loads to the cargo hook of the helicopter," LaPlant said. "Setting up the LZ

was an awesome opportunity — to see the precise measurements on the ground and the mechanics of staking in the markers."

LaPlant also said hooking up under the aircraft was incredible, having an aircraft a few feet above his head and experiencing the noise and the rotor wash, while staying focused on the task.

Tech. Sgt. Crystal A. Ziehl, a load planning supervisor, 74th Aerial Port Squadron, was the safety noncommissioned officer and team leader for one of the touch-down points.

"It was my first time working around a helicopter, and even though everything was explained pretty well and we rehearsed ahead of time, the noise and the rotor wash were very powerful," she said.

"Literally, no one could hear you talk when you were right next to them near the aircraft, and the force of the rotor wash.... After you've hooked up the load and

you're running to your safety point, the wind pushes you - That was a little bit more than I expected.

Ziehl said the rehearsals and pre-flight training gave her confidence, but the noise is something you can only truly understand it by experiencing it.

Senior Airman Chet D. Jones, passenger service specialist, 74th Aerial Port Squadron, said he enjoyed the experience.

"I loved the high-speed training! We thoroughly covered the tasks and it helped me understand how everything is done correctly by checking your work and team's work so that the load is ready for the mission," he said.

Jones underscored the relevance of the training exercise.

"While I was deployed a Forward Operating Base in Afghanistan, we relied on helicopters to re-supply our patrol bases and to avoid improvised explosive devices and other ground threats, or if the road conditions were too poor for driving," he said. "So, using air support was the best way to move materiel about 70 percent of the time."

Offering an aviator's perspective as the pilot-in-command of the Sept. 9 sling load mission, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jonathan Weller, aviation mission survivability officer, C/2-149th Aviation, said it was great working jointly with the Airmen on the ground, and conducting so many iterations with well-prepared ground teams.

"The hook-teams were quick and responsive, and the use of signaling smoke and a ground radio operator was invaluable in painting a true picture of what's happening on the landing zone," he said.

CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

IAAFA Airman shares her heritage, encourages cultural cooperation

By Rachel Kersey

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

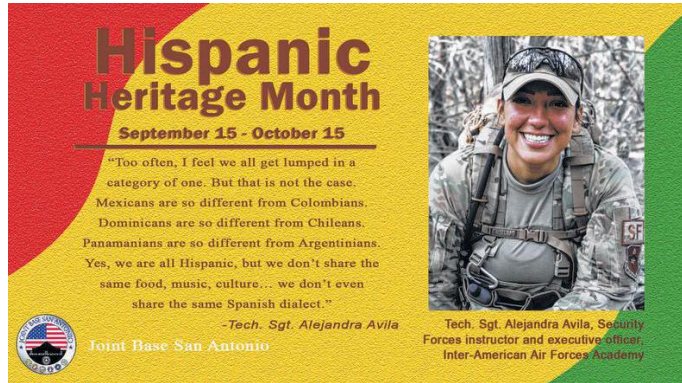
Tech. Sgt. Alejandra Avila will celebrate her ninth year in the Air Force Sept. 27, right in the middle of Hispanic Heritage Month.

"I am assigned as a Security Forces instructor at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy. However, about two weeks ago, I was moved to work as the executive officer for the academy's commandant," she said.

The new job at IAAFA allows Avila to incorporate the Hispanic culture into her daily life seamlessly.

The IAAFA, located at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, partners with South and Central American nations to provide military education and training to ensure strong friendships and security cooperation across the Western Hemisphere. As a result, many of the courses are taught in Spanish.

"With this new job, I'm able to speak my native tongue every day with my students and coworkers," Avila said.



LORI A. BULTMAN

Born in Monterrey — a huge city surrounded by mountains in Nuevo Leon, Mexico — from a young age, Avila's life has been one of transition and growth. At the age of six, she left her hometown of Matamoros and moved to Reynosa, where she attended

a private school and made new friends.

"I would walk a couple of blocks to go to the 'tienda,' which is a little store in the neighborhood. I'd spend countless hours playing arcade games there with the neighborhood kids," she said. "There was also a big park in the middle of the community I lived in, so I would constantly walk over with my neighbor and spend the day there."

Four years later, her family moved to the United States. They settled in Pharr, Texas, and she encountered some of the biggest obstacles in the immigrant experience.

"When I was little, I did not know any English," she said. "Moving to the U.S. was a culture shock! Leaving everything behind was not easy. By far, it has been the biggest challenge I have faced in my life."

After being placed back a grade due to language proficiency, one of Avila's teachers spent a lot of time helping her learn English, she said.

After completing her education in the U.S., Avila joined the U.S. Air Force to give back to a country that gave her family so much.

Nearly a decade into her service, she is satisfied with her career journey.

"It has been amazing! I feel I have done a lot in the short time I have been in," she said. "I started as a gate guard, then moved up to patrol. Then, I was assigned to a unit in Belgium where I provided security for U.S. assets. I also worked as a corrections specialist at the jail on base."

Next, Avila moved to be an

"Too often, I feel we (Hispanics) all get lumped in a category of one. But that is not the case. Mexicans are so different from Colombians. Dominicans are so different from Chileans. Panamanians are so different from Argentinians. Yes, we are all Hispanic, but we don't share the same food, music, culture ... we don't even share the same Spanish dialect."

Tech. Sgt. Alejandra Avila

instructor for military members of partner nations in Central and South America, and the Caribbean, she said.

In keeping with her upward trajectory, she was promoted to her new position at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy.

"Now I'm the executive at the academy," she said. "There has not been a time in my career where I am not learning something new."

During Hispanic Heritage Month, Avila continues to be an advocate for Americans learning new things and experiencing her culture, just like she has experienced theirs, she said, suggesting travel as a way to see other people and cultures firsthand.

"Too often, I feel we (Hispanics) all get lumped in a category of one. But that is not the case," she explained. "Mexicans are so different from Colombians. Dominicans are so different from Chileans. Panamanians are so different from Argentinians. Yes, we are all Hispanic, but we don't share the same food, music, culture ... we don't even share the same Spanish dialect."

JBSA support to evacuees at COVID-19 onset shaped later responses to the pandemic

By David DeKunder

502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

On Feb. 7, a plane filled with American citizens, evacuated from China at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, landed at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field Annex.

The plane would be the first of four flights in which nearly 400 U.S. citizens evacuated from China were flown to, screened, quarantined and housed at JBSA facilities from Feb. 7 to March 25.

The operation was part of a coordinated effort between JBSA and federal agencies on the front lines responding to COVID-19.

Lt. Col. Joseph Tortella, 902nd Civil Engineer Squadron commander and JBSA Emergency Operation Center director, said JBSA provided facilities for the screening and housing of evacuees flown from China to support personnel from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or DHHS, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, whose personnel worked at the screening facility in Hangar 1610 near the airfield.

"There were substantial lessons learned from the partnership and the operation that DHHS executed here at JBSA-Lackland that we were able to transition into our support posture for JBSA," Tortella said. "The partnership was stronger than anybody could have ever hoped for. Since March, when DHHS left and we began supporting JBSA, our success has been rooted in that operation and that mission and that partnership we built with DHHS.

"Our responsibility was to provide facility space only for the operation and everything else was executed by DHHS," Tortella said. "All contract



TODD HOLLY

The Department of Defense provided temporary lodging support for up to 1,000 passengers who were evacuated from China to the U.S. in response to the coronavirus outbreak there.

support, support needed for the facilities, transportation, everything, was all managed and executed by DHHS."

After the evacuees were screened by DHHS personnel at Hangar 1610, they were moved to Gateway Lodge at JBSA-Lackland, where they were quarantined for several weeks before being flown home. The DHHS personnel also worked within the Gateway Lodge.

A total of 384 evacuees from China, from the first plane of passengers that came in Feb. 7 to the last plane that flew into JBSA-Kelly Field March 12, came through the screening area at Hangar 1610 and ultimately were quarantined at Gateway Lodge, with the last evacuees leaving JBSA-Lackland after finishing their quarantine March 25.

The first plane that landed at JBSA-Kelly Field Feb. 7

contained passengers from Wuhan, China, and the last three planes brought evacuees from cruise ships docked in Japan and California on which passengers tested positive for COVID-19.

The joint base also worked with another federal agency, the U.S. Marshals Service, which provided security for the screening area and Gateway Lodge.

Tortella said the support JBSA provided helped DHHS accomplish their mission.

"It was a large support response from the 502nd Air Base Wing in order to establish that capability here," he said. "It was a substantial contribution from JBSA personnel."

Support was provided by the 502nd Operational Support Squadron, which provided hangar space for the screening area, facility, and flight line operations; the 502nd Force

Support Squadron provided lodging at the Gateway Lodge; the 502nd Contracting Squadron served as the subject matter experts and liaison with DHHS on the execution of the contract between JBSA and DHHS for the use of the screening facility and Gateway Lodge.

In addition, the 502nd Security Forces Squadron provided security within the installation, and the 502nd Logistics Readiness Squadron oversaw transportation and aircraft support for DHHS personnel coming off and on the installation. If needed, JBSA Emergency Services would also have provided fire and safety support.

Tortella said during that time, anyone who was in quarantine who tested positive for COVID-19 was taken to a medical facility off JBSA. The facilities provided by JBSA

were strictly used for quarantine purposes.

Additionally, no JBSA personnel came in contact with anyone who was in quarantine, he said. Only those working with the evacuees directly, DHHS personnel and U.S. Marshals, came in contact with them.

After the last evacuees left and DHHS wrapped up its mission March 25 at JBSA, the Gateway Lodge was transitioned into a quarantine facility for service members who have tested positive for COVID-19, including basic military training recruits.

Tortella said the same procedures and protocols that were utilized by DHHS in quarantining the evacuees are the same ones JBSA is still using to quarantine and isolate service members and recruits on the installation who have tested positive for COVID-19.

RANDOLPH

Third class graduates from Pilot Training Next

From Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

The third iteration of Pilot Training Next conducted their third and final graduation Sept. 3 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. The first four students graduated Aug. 13, the second group of four students graduated Aug. 21, and the final six students graduated Sept. 3.

Fourteen students, who began training in January, earned their pilot wings on time, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We graduated these students on time over eight months of training, even during a worldwide pandemic," said Lt. Col. Ryan Riley, Detachment 24 commander. "We were able to successfully demonstrate the utility of remote instruction, and student-centered learning, which allowed us to operate at 96 percent efficiency."

The third iteration started with 16 students: 11 from the U.S. Air Force, two from the U.S. Navy, one from the U.S. Marine Corps, one from the Air National Guard and one from the Royal Air Force. The next step for the new Air Force pilots is formal training for the B-2, B-52, F-16, C-5, U-28, KC-135 and RC-135.

"PTN versions two and three have been typical reflections of an undergraduate pilot training class," said Lt. Col. Robert Knapp, Det. 24 operations officer. "Of that representative group, we had a standard bell curve of performance, but given the pace of the PTN program, our student pilots performed remarkably well



SARAYUTH PINTHONG

Detachment 24 student pilots train on a virtual reality flight simulator as part of the Pilot Training Next program March 5 at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

because of their focus, determination and the training model."

PTN uses a student-centered learning model, where students are encouraged to use divergent reasoning, problem solving and critical thinking. This learning model, with the use of virtual reality immersive training devices, self-paced academics, and a competency-based timeline fosters enhanced learning and allows student pilots to progress at individual paces.

"We move at the pace of the student, not the pace of the syllabus," Riley said. "A great

example is our students flew their initial pattern solo around their fourth ride. This wasn't driven from a timeline event, but because they were ready to solo. Student-centric learning coupled with immersive learning and modern technology has proven to be highly effective and it's all underpinned by quality instruction.

"PTN is successful because we have motivated instructors who find great value in instructor development and are better communicators from it," Riley added. "I am very excited for this aspect of our program to export across

AETC. Quality, focused instruction fosters more efficient operations and deeper student learning."

Student-centered learning fosters a cooperative learning environment featuring coach-athlete style instruction. In this learning environment instructor pilots are still the authority figure, but IPs and students play an equally active role in the learning process.

"We are truly proud of the advances in our training methods and our instructor corps' ability to adjust their instructor styles," Knapp said. "The coach-athlete style of instruction requires more

dedication and investment by our IPs and would not be possible without their commitment."

In addition to verifying the benefits of student-centered learning, ITDs and the value of quality instruction, PTN has also demonstrated the value of early access to content.

"I'd be remiss if I didn't say how much of a team effort our innovation efforts are. Our partnership with the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, U.S. Navy, Royal Air Force, and myriad civilian and government organizations is incredible and they are applying what is learned within PTN towards their own innovation efforts," Riley said.

The proven concepts learned over the three iterations of Pilot Training Next are scaling through Undergraduate Pilot Training 2.5, which is currently underway at JBSA-Randolph and at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

"It's exciting to see our lessons learned being applied to UPT 2.5," Riley said. "The PTN work, which spans three years is destined to have a permanent impact on how we train future Air Force pilots and I am confident the professionals leading UPT 2.5 will raise the bar on the quality of students AETC produces."

After this, PTN's focus shifts to training air mobility fundamentals for students who graduate UPT 2.5 here, as well as developing instructors to provide the quality instruction needed to cultivate a cooperative learning environment.

340th FTG employee, veteran honored as September Hidden Hero



Anthony Smith, 340th Flying Training Group lead travel administrator, helps members resolve travel questions and challenges. Smith was honored as the Schertz-Cibolo-Selma Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Council Hidden Hero during a ceremony held Sept. 15 at the Schertz Civic Center, Schertz, Texas.

By Debbie Gildea

340TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Anthony Smith, 340th Flying Training Group lead travel administrator and an Air Force veteran, was honored Sept. 15 by the Schertz-Cibolo-Selma Chamber of Commerce and Military Affairs Council as the September Hidden Hero during a ceremony and luncheon held at the Schertz Civic Center.

The MAC Hidden Heroes program exists to honor military members and veterans for their contributions to defense, as well as to the local base and civilian communities, committee chair Ivory Freeman explained.

Smith, whose commitment to the mission and safety of the operational forces while an active duty civil engineer NCO at operational flying bases earned him respect and allegiance from operators, maintainers and leadership.

This father of three young men, following separation from active duty, sought additional opportunities to serve and found his perfect match in the finance directorate for the Air Force's largest flying group — the 340th Flying Training Group.

As the group's most knowledgeable member regarding official travel, his devotion and commitment to the mission are evident in his efforts to inform and educate the hundreds of Reserve pilots assigned at seven different bases across the country on travel issues that are far more complex than routine Air Force travel. In addition to selfless service to his team, Smith is a routine volunteer at the San Antonio Food Bank and local humane society events.

His work ethic is equal only to his love for others and his contributions to the group directly enable Reserve instructor pilots to commit themselves to their flying mission, his commander said.

Reserve recruiters enhance social media knowledge to reach more recruits

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

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, recruiters have turned more to technology — including social media — to reach potential recruits. A group of 15 Total Force recruiters from the 351st Recruiting Squadron recently sharpened their social media skills by participating in the Defense Information School's virtual Social Media Forum.

"I wanted to get smarter in this virtual world of recruiting," said Master Sgt. Denise Alston, an in-service recruiter at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina. "My hopes are to be able to reach as many active-duty members as I can as we work in a less face-to-face environment.

When Covid-19 first sent us home and I was missing my monthly Palace Chase and Palace Front meetings to reach my audience, I knew I had to get smarter on social media. Zoom was booming, so I figured this could go hand-in-hand to reach members."

During normal times, the daily grind and constant traveling from visiting recruits and going to the Military Entrance and Processing Station take up large parts of a recruiter's day. Since COVID-19 has forced most recruiters to work from home, the need for a social media presence was amplified.

"Today we live in a social media-driven society so when the opportunity came available to learn about this space

through the Defense Information School, I wanted to take advantage of it to equip myself with tools to effectively incorporate the knowledge into my current role as a recruiter," said Master Sgt. David Brian Gaffney, a recruiter with the 351st RCS, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. "Building a social media platform is similar to recruiting because you have to build trust, create value, foster conversation with feedback and cultivate consistency."

The two recruiters each gained different insights from the class as well as their teammates who attended the course.

"The course was very educational and insightful, shedding more light on the social media spectrum than I

had expected," Gaffney said. "The course gave me a better understanding of how social media platforms should be utilized from a macro and micro scale and some of the capabilities and strategies that are pushed through certain platforms to promote and manage content. When deciding to use social media in the workplace, ask for help, ensure you are adhering to the guidelines and policies set forth by your organization, have someone review and when in doubt reach out to public affairs before posting."

Alston has already begun utilizing some of the knowledge she gained from the course.

"There are a lot of creative ways to make your business come alive in a virtual world, but you have to be willing to

put some time in to make it happen," Alston said. "You reap what you sow! I already went in and put in-service recruiting at Shaw AFB on the map so people can google and find us. People always have their phones and tablets in their hands so guess what ... we can reach more people than ever."

Gaffney left the course with a newfound respect for social media and an excitement to put his new learning to task.

"The seminar has given me a greater appreciation for social media content creators and maintainers," Gaffney said.

"Before attending the seminar, I had little knowledge of social media platforms and since the seminar, I am excited about the possibilities and future utilization of this new-age technology in my workspace."



BRIAN J. VALENCIA

502ND Air Base Wing Leadership along with Randolph Field Independent School District personnel and project managers stand together for a photo at the Randolph Elementary School ground breaking ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Sept. 17. The project will add additions to the existing elementary school for grades 2nd through 5th and will include a library and cafeteria.

Groundbreaking sets stage for new chapter at Randolph Elementary

By Robert Goetz
502ND AIR BASE WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A Sept. 17 groundbreaking ceremony heralded a new chapter for a school that has served Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph for more than six decades.

Following a construction project that is expected to be finished in time for the 2021-22 school year, Randolph Elementary School will have a new \$15.5 million multipurpose facility that will include classrooms for grades 2-5, administrative offices, a library/media center and a cafeteria.

Randolph Field Independent School District board members and administrators, as well as Randolph Elementary School staff members and teachers, joined representatives of the project's construction and design teams in celebrating the beginning of the facility's building phase.

"This project is exciting, as our beautiful old building was definitely showing its age," said Dr. Allanna Hemenway, Randolph Elementary School principal. "We are moving our students from a 1952 building to a building pre-wired with the technology infrastructure and larger spaces that our students deserve. While we will miss the

beauty of our old building, we are so excited to have a campus that is ready to meet all our students' needs."

Dr. Brian Holt, who is beginning his first school year as RFISD superintendent, discussed the new 56,000-square-foot building's unique features.

"We will be changing to an outside access facility with the addition of indoor courtyards," he said. "A state-of-the-art cafeteria will be added along with a spacious open-concept library. Technology will also be upgraded to current standards with the ability to upgrade in the future."

The new building will

provide students with a safe learning environment, Hemenway said.

"The new campus will be more secure as students will have interior hallways to move from class to class," she said. "They will no longer have to dart in the rain to reach a different classroom."

The old elementary school was razed this summer, but some structures will remain, including the administration building that faces Harmon Drive, the gym, the early childhood center that serves pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first-grade students, and the cafeteria, which will be home to the school's music classroom as

well as a working auditorium for student and other performances.

During the construction phase, students in grades 2-5 will attend classes in two large portable buildings that have been placed on campus. In-person classroom instruction will begin Sept. 21 with extensive COVID-19 health safety and sanitation measures in place.

The improvements to the elementary school are the final pieces in a district facilities plan that began in the 2015-16 school year, Holt said.

"Our students will have a new modern facility that should meet their educational needs for the next several decades," he said.

Deadline to renew expired, expiring CACs drawing near

By Robert Goetz
502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The deadline is quickly approaching for Joint Base San Antonio military members and civilians with expired or expiring common access cards.

Earnest Bridges, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Military Personnel Division chief, advises all JBSA personnel whose CACs have expired or will expire Sept. 30 to make an appointment as soon as possible to renew their ID cards.

Expired CACs have been accepted since April 16 but will no longer be accepted after the Sept. 30 deadline.

"All three JBSA locations — JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, JBSA-Lackland and JBSA-Randolph — have extended business hours," Bridges said. "Walk-ins are accepted from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday

through Friday and appointments from 5 to 7 p.m. to process expiring CACs. At JBSA-Fort Sam Houston only, Saturday appointments are offered from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m."

All extended hours are for CACs and by appointment only, he said.

Because of the high volume of personnel who require new CACs at this time, in-person service is only available for initial issuance of CACs, lost or stolen CACs, expired CACs and PIN resets of CACs, Bridges noted.

The best way to renew an expiring CAC is to make an appointment at <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil/appointment/default.aspx>.

Bridges emphasized that any CACs not updated prior to the deadline and not effective Oct. 1 will be confiscated at all JBSA gates. Expired CACs also impact access to CAC-enabled sites and systems.



COURTESY PHOTO

The deadline is quickly approaching for Joint Base San Antonio military members and civilians with expired or expiring common access cards.

Uniformed Services Identification cards — those for dependents, retirees and others — have been accepted since Jan. 1 and will continue to be accepted through June 30, 2021.